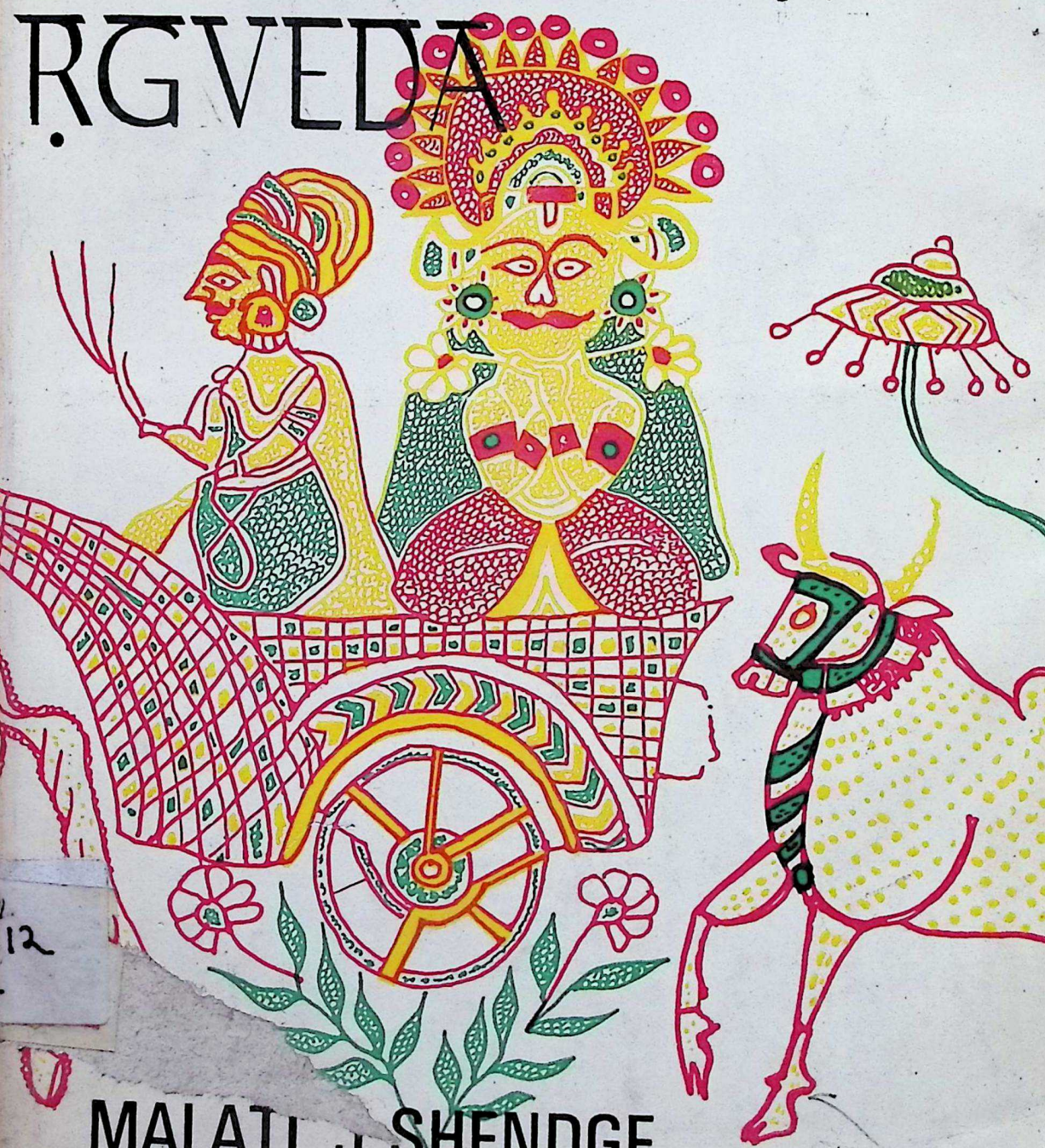
THE CIVILIZED DEMONS : THE HARAPPANS IN RGVEDA



MALATI J SHENDGE

Myth and mysticism have reigned supreme in Ṛgvedic interpretation for more than two millennia and a half. Even now, it cannot be said to be free of these. This study aims at completing the process of rational enquiry in Ṛgveda begun two centuries ago. It leaves behind myths and mystic experiences, simultaneously drawing the line between fact and fancy which has eluded the scholars.

Two types of evidence — literary and archaeological — have been used. Literary evidence ranges from Ṛgveda to the Brāhmaṇas. The archaeological material covers pre-Harappan, Harappan and post-Harappan levels. Through the interdisciplinary approach consisting of linguistic, anthropological and symbolical analysis of the material, the study emphasizes a consistently rational attitude to the study of Ṛgveda. In fact, as the study amply demonstrates, the fresh air of reason may change our understanding of Ṛgveda and also of ancient Indian history. Ṛgvedic hymns from this viewpoint may probably prove to be a valuable source of information of the historical events which led to the downfall of the pre-Aryan Indus civilization. This is correlated to the archaeological material available on the Harappan sites.

This is the first investigation of its kind and the conclusions of the study are no less original. Besides establishing the rationality of the Ṛgvedic narratives, it shows the events and their agents to be historical in the light of available archaeological material.

The theory and the approach hold out a promise and may transform our understanding of these ancient compositions from myth to history.

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THE HARAPPANS IN ṚGVEDA

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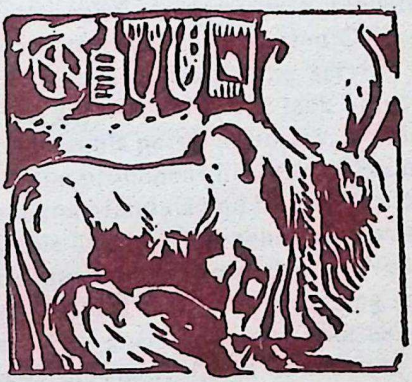
MALATI J. SHENDGE



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Preface

THE circumstances which led me to this problem are narrated later. There were many odds against which I had to strive. However, the undeniable importance of the problem to ancient Indian history and the vistas the new approach opened were the compelling forces.

The odds were not limited to my being an outsider to Vedic studies and archaeology. They extended to lack of institutional support and facilities. As a matter of fact, it will not be an overstatement to say that the research presented here was done in academic wilderness, during the years 1970-72. Only in 1973, I succeeded in getting financial assistance for the preparation of press-copy. Although the typescript was ready for press at the end of 1973, and my conclusions were published through reports and talks since the end of 1973, for circumstances beyond my control the book could not come out till now.

In striving to complete the work, the chief assistance was rendered by Professor R.D. Vadekar, my former teacher in Fergusson College, Poona. His life as a teacher has been a message of unfailing service to all. True to his reputation, he filled up the gap created by the lack of institutional support. Besides giving me access to his personal library, he used his good offices to make the materials in the prominent libraries of Poona, viz. Fergusson College, Vaidika Saṁśodhana Maṇḍala and Deccan College Post-graduate Research Institute available to me. Throughout the work, he helped me in reading Ṛgveda. His incredible knowledge of Vedic, Buddhist, Jain and Prakrit literatures coupled with vast learning and good memory have been a great asset. His encouragement and assistance have been so patient, unfailing and constant, that it is difficult to think of the state of affairs without them. May he graciously condescend to accept this work as a very small token of my profound and lasting gratitude.

Many individuals have taken interest in this work and contributed to its completion in some way or other. I am deeply indebted to Professor Dr. V.V. Gokhale, who imbibed the critical attitude when I worked for my doctoral dissertation under him many years ago. Mr. M.N. Deshpande, now Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi understood the importance of the problem, gave me the right advice and facilities to work on archaeological material. I am deeply indebted to him. My thanks are due to the Archaeological Survey

of India for supplying the photographs of the excavated material and for giving the necessary permission to include them here. Professor Satish Chandra, now Chairman, University Grants Commission also showed appreciation of the project. I had many discussions with Drs. Ramchandra Gandhi and Hiren Gohain and their suggestions have been extremely useful.

A fellowship and contingency grant from Indian Council of Historical Research have enabled me to get the manuscript ready for press. During my tenure as a Fellow, I was affiliated to Indian History Congress, New Delhi. I acknowledge with thanks the facilities extended to me by the permanent secretary of the Congress, Professor Satish Chandra. I am extremely grateful to the individuals and private trusts who have advanced the publication of this work through generous donations.

I should like to thank Mrs. C.R. Mavalankar, the Librarian, Vaidika Saṁśodhana Maṇḍala for willing assistance. I wish to express my appreciation of the efficiency and cooperation of Mr. V.B. Belsare and his staff in the library of Deccan College. I acknowledge with thanks the cooperation of the library staff of Central Archaeological Survey Library, New Delhi and especially the assistance rendered by Shri Bhagavat Sahai.

Finally a word about the diacritical marks of Sanskrit, Avestan, and Akkadian words is necessary. Sanskrit system does not need any comments. In the Avestan transliteration Justi's system had to be used on account of the non-availability of the diacritical marks. For the same reason the Akkadian voiceless stop and voiceless palatal fricative are written as ḫ and sh.

July, 1977 Malati J. Shendge

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Map

Map showing Indus valley, and Western Asia

Abbreviations

AiBr	Aitareyabrāhmaṇa
AV	Atharvavedasaṁhitā
Chanhu-daro	Excavations at Chanhu-daro, E.J.H. Mackay, New Haven, Connecticut, 1943
FEM	Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro, E.J.H. Mackay, Delhi, 1938
GB	Gopathabrāhmaṇa
Harappa	Excavations at Harappa, M.S. Vats, Delhi, 1941
JAOS	Journal of American Oriental Society
JB	Jaiminīyabrāhmaṇa
JBRS	Journal of Bihar Research Society
MASI	Memoirs of Archaeological Survey of India
MBh	Mahābhārata
Mohenjo-daro	Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization, John Marshall, London, 1931
ṚV	Ṛgvedasaṁhitā
ŚB	Śatapathabrāhmaṇa
TaiBr	Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa
TMB	Tāṇḍyamahābrāhmaṇa
TS	Taittirīyasaṁhitā
VS	Vājasaneyisaṁhitā
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

Errata

Page	*Line*	*Printed*	*Read*
3	9, 27	Indus valley	Indus
9	16	Indus valley	Indus
18	1	Asura	Ashur
,,	2	Asura	Ashur
,,	9	Asura	Ashur
22	2 from bottom	iooking	looking
25	1	Balih	Balīḥ
30	37	Fig. 4	Fig. 5
31	1	Asura and	Asura
32	35	*niṣadāpatyam*	*niṣādā°*
,,	40	*puroḍāśa*	*°ḍāś*
33	2 from bottom	,,	,,
50	3	*śactpati*	*śacī°*
,,	22	ragon	dragon
55	8 from bottom	*Purandara*	*Puraṁdara*
62	32	*Agnīdhra*	*Āgnī°*
68	3	*upāśa°*	*upaśa°*
84	6	mythoposm	mythopoeism
85	18	*yajñiyam*	*yajñiyāṁsam*
135ff	7	*carṣaṇī*	*ćarṣaṇi*
137	27	*tsāru*	*tsaru*
,,	28	*tusa*	*tuṣa*
162	21	century H	cemetery H
169	13	family	family of
183	3	Nara	Nārā
252	12 from bottom	Mohenjo-daro at	Mohenjó-daro and at
351	14	water?	water.
377	27	treatises	treaties

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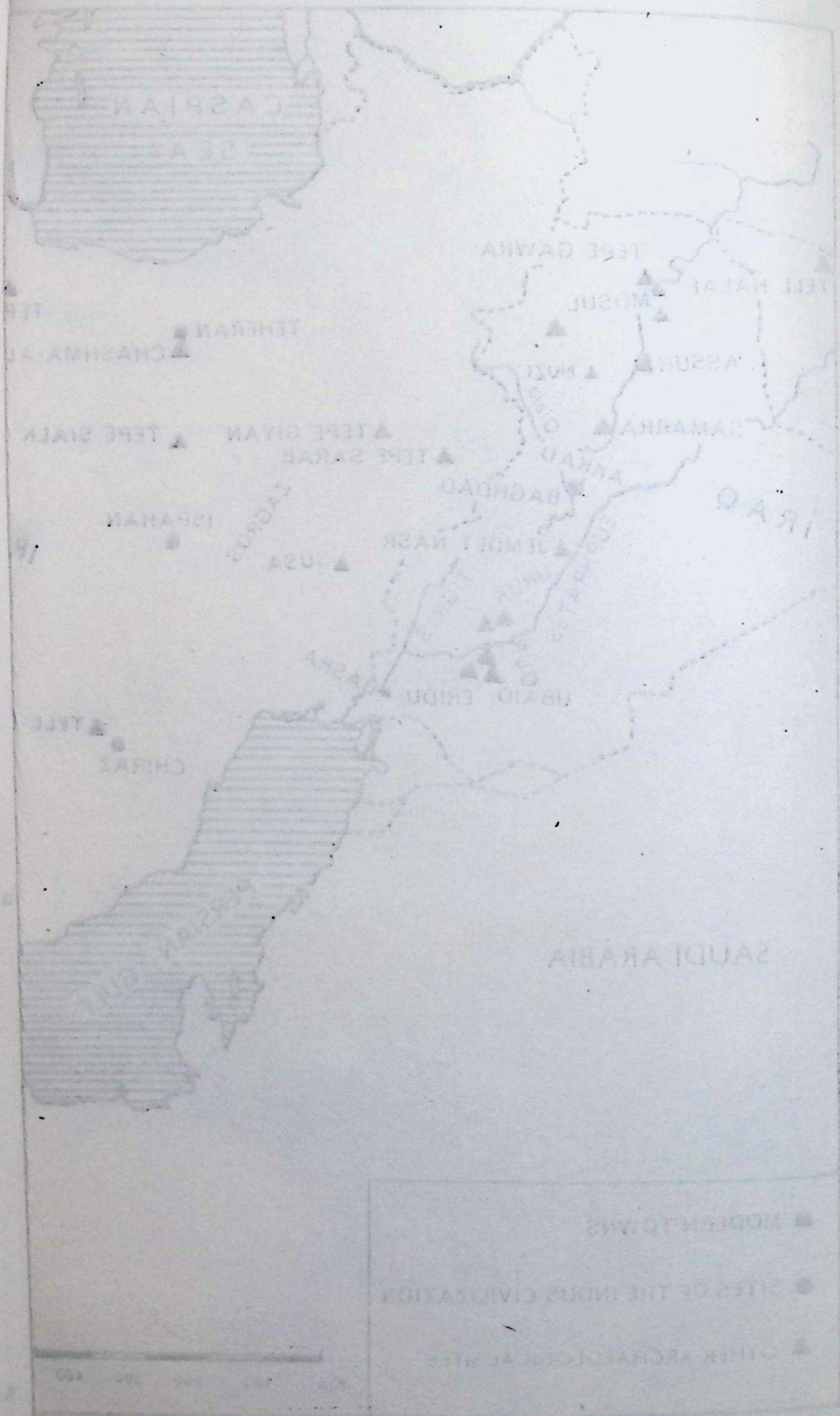
MAP SHOWING INDUS AND WEST ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



PART I

I

1. Introductory

THIS study was never planned. Yet its unplanned and in fact almost accidental beginning is not without relevance to the objectivity with which the study has been carried out and is hoped to be understood, appreciated or criticised. The unbiased attitude is evident in this circumstance itself. How the hypothesis and methodology unfolded themselves is narrated in Section 3. In fact, there has been no conditioning of the author's attitudes by way of imbibing the viewpoints and biases of particular disciplines involved. This has its own benefits and handicaps. In this case, benefits seem to outweigh the handicaps.

The study uses primary sources in Vedic literature. As far as Ṛgveda is concerned, the literal translation of Geldner's German translation is generally given with square brackets indicating the author's supplements. Whenever English translations of Vedic texts by Vedic scholars are available, they are used, of course, not without reference to original Sanskrit texts. For the meanings of words Monier-Williams' 'A Sanskrit-English Dictionary' has been used mainly for historical perspective, not to the exclusion of Grassmann's Wörterbuch zum Ṛgveda. It has not been thought necessary to cite the vast bulk of secondary source material in Vedic studies because this work does not seek to refute the points of view professed by eminent scholars in the field but takes upon itself the task to demonstrate an approach which holds promise to the Vedologist, Archaeologist, Historian, and Anthropologist alike. Its basic assumption is that despite the rational attitude of modern scholarship to the understanding of Ṛgveda and subsequent Vedic literature, the traditional Hindu point of view as reflected in Sāyaṇa's commentary persists and that the interpretation of Ṛgveda has not changed radically or freed itself from the traditional approach. A broad summary of the present state of understanding of Ṛgveda has therefore been thought sufficient. Moreover no major work, having a direct bearing on the interdisciplinary approach demonstrated here, has been done so far.

The purpose of the study is to show how through an interdisciplinary approach, combining the literal interpretation of Ṛgveda with the

study of processes involved in the creation of myths and rendering of narratives of historical events into symbolic ones, emerge the historical events and social, political, economic, and religious practices which, when correlated to archaeological material, leave little doubt about the possibility of the correctness of the approach.

The conventional stratification of Ṛgveda is borne in mind, though it is not of primary relevance to the present study. Of greater importance, however, is the interpretation of Ṛgveda which is necessarily of later date than Ṛgvedic hymns. The statistical remarks depend heavily upon Macdonell's Vedic Mythology. The study, however, nowhere gives exact counts nor depends on them for definitive conclusions. Such observations in literary works of this type may only indicate that a particular usage is not lacking. As it was thought that the use of terms like Aryans, non-Aryans, pre-Aryans or Harappans to denote the ethnic groups in the discussion of literary material would lead to a confusion, presupposing that which is going to be proved, the conventional usage 'the devas' & 'the asuras', is maintained without translating them. The terms deva, asura, gandharva, rakṣas, piśāca and yakṣa are not italicised. These terms with the exception of deva are names of mythic beings or otherwise. And, probably, in the fitness of things, they should be written with capitals which is also not done with the fear of spoiling the format. The diacritical marks are used uniformly even in citations of older works.

The approach may possibly represent a non-specialist's view of both fields of study and may in the long run prove beneficial and rejuvenating. The specialists, especially the traditionalists, may not agree to many of the interpretations offered here. But if the problems of the Indus civilization, Vedic literature, and Indian history are to find a lasting solution covering the total available source material, an integrated approach of the type used here, leading to a review of the established notions and theories, appears to be unavoidable.

Before going into the details of methodology, it may be worthwhile to think about the puzzling, and at places almost absurd and ridiculous, nature of the contents of Ṛgveda on the one hand, and the questions the archaeologists, who excavated the Indus valley civilization, are trying to answer on the basis of archaeological data on the other. What do the constant references in the Ṛgveda to the wars between gods and demons mean? Are they really the wars between the forces of good and evil as it is generally assumed? Or, were they the wars fought by the Aryans with their predecessors in this land? If so, why and how they came to be considered as wars between gods and demons, i.e. mythopoeised? If the composers of Ṛgveda were the Aryans, who were the non-Aryans they fought with? It is an established fact that the wars

Indra fought represent the Aryan point of view, whereas their opponents, the asuras and others, are considered mythic beings. This probably deprived most of the Ṛgveda of its historicity. Logically if one party is mythic, so must the other be by its very association with the former. Thus even the gods may not be able to represent the Aryan point of view. If the gods represent the Aryan point of view, the opponents must represent the non-Aryan point of view.

The archaeologists, who have excavated the towns of an ancient civilization, now known as the Indus valley civilization, are faced with certain problems. The settlements spread over a vast area from Rupar at the foot of Simla hills in the north to Bhagatrava in the valley of Tapti in the south, from Alamgirpur in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab in the east to Sutkagen-dor on the Makran coast in Baluchistan. In this region more than hundred[1] sites testified by archaeological methods as belonging to an identical civilization, have been located and/or excavated. The exact identity of the makers of this vast civilization, the causes and agents of its destruction, the system of governance, the nature of the language of these people and the decipherment of the script, the extent of the civilization, etc., are still controversial issues. Besides these problems, it is not known whether there were any survivors and what role this civilization played in the subsequent historical developments. Whether archaeological discoveries can satisfactorily settle these issues in the absence of written records is difficult to say.

In this situation, Ṛgveda which is the most ancient Indo-Aryan composition preserved over thirty centuries with amazing fidelity and accuracy rare in such compositions becomes a possible source of information nearest in time to the Indus valley civilization. So far, except one article by T. Burrow,[2] no definite connection between Indus civilization and Ṛgveda has been established. Ṛgveda is still no more than an account of wars waged by the gods and demons intermingled with misty mysticism. 'The vedic literature is imaginative or primarily concerned with religious ritual...' 'It mentions many tribes, places, and rivers which are probably historical but for the most part they cannot be satisfactorily identified or located...' 'The dividing line between events on earth and mythology is not clearly maintained in these poems [i.e. Ṛgveda] and was probably not even *logically conceived*.'[3]

The argument may be summarised as follows: Part I shows that a number of hymns of Ṛgveda were not originally understood as myths but were composed to celebrate the victory of the Aryans over the non-Aryans. The references in these hymns to the wars were to those between the Aryans and non-Aryans. The events referred to in the exploits of Indra and Viṣṇu, the leaders of the Aryans in their conflict, probably took place historically. The opponents of the Aryans were primarily the Asuras, the

Rakṣas, the Gandharvas, the Yakṣas, and the Piśācas. Besides these, there were also other ethnic groups who too opposed the Aryan advance in the Indo-Gangetic plain. When the Aryans created a religion out of these events, they deified their leaders and arrogated to themselves the title of cosmic good. The opponents naturally became demons and represented the cosmic evil. The rituals of this religion have come down to us in the Brāhmaṇas, which are composed of the narratives followed by the ritual prescriptions which are expected to produce magically the desired effect. In practice, a suitable change of meaning was introduced in the interpretations of Ṛgvedic hymns leading to the fanciful and religious connotations. Thus the Ṛgvedic hymns are given symbolic, mythopoeic and religious significance especially in the context of the struggle between the forces of good and evil, of light and darkness. When this was done, the hymns addressed to others also assumed a religious and mythopoeic significance. The structure and processes of transformation of historical events into mythopoeic and symbolic are unravelled through a method which is applicable to Ṛgveda especially in the context of the wars of gods and demons.

For establishing the historicity and rationality of Ṛgvedic narratives, the so-called wars between gods and demons are shown to be the wars between the Aryans and the non-Aryans. For this, the human identity of the Asuras, the Rakṣas, the Gandharvas, the Yakṣas, the Piśācas, the Dāsas, the Dasyus, and the Paṇis and the earthly nature of the wars is established. Of course, other ethnic groups are not included in this discussion, though their existence is not denied. The working hypothesis is that in ancient times the people named themselves after their gods. During the process of mythopoeisation the traits of the gods were attributed to their human followers thereby creating the confusion between the two.

The various stages through which the conflict was brought to a culmination along with the strategy used by the Aryans are also traced.

Part II attempts to correlate the conclusions of Part I with the available archaeological findings on the Harappan sites. On the basis of the correlations in the cultural traits associated with the opponents of the gods in the Vedic literature and the archaeological findings on the Indus civilization sites, it appears that these opponents were identical with the Harappans. Prior to this, the archaeological material is discussed in details, with a view to bring out clearly the implications of the archaeological findings and establish rigorous correlations. The method emphasizes laying down of criteria, sifting and interpretation of material to bring out the social, economic, political and religious implications. The practices in these spheres are further correlated in the

literary material discussed in Part III which tries to reconstruct the philosophy of life and the political organization of the non-Aryans.

From archaeological viewpoint the Aryans are shown never to have occupied the Harappan sites. After crossing into the Indian sub-continent through the northern passes, they entered the Harappan territory somewhere in the north-east. Their traces may be found in the copper-implements, the hoard of Gungeria being the earliest. Cemetery H may not be the handiwork of the Aryans but the descendants of the Harappans themselves. The Harappans, who fled the country at the Aryan advent or later, perhaps settled in Persia and were later known as the Zoroastrians. The traces of flood and destruction found at Mohenjo-daro and other southern sites, are probably due to the untimely floods caused by the waters from a huge man-made dam, described in the Ṛgvedic hymns. This was done by Indra and Viṣṇu when they found iti mpossible to defeat the non-Aryans directly. The conflagrations in the late levels at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are to be traced to the use of fire for the eviction of the Harappans hiding in the ruins of what were once prosperous houses.

In Part III, the question posed is about the identity of the so-called gods of the Ṛgvedic pantheon. Part I shows Indra and Viṣṇu as human leaders of the Aryans in their conflict with the non-Aryans. However, the identity of the rest of the so-called gods remains obscure. These gods were probably the cabinet members of the non-Aryan government with Varuṇa as their king and emperor. The reconstruction of the well-knit political system governing the vast non-Aryan empire is attempted bringing out the political, social, economic, and religious practices.

Another cause of the later confusion between the human and the divine, which made mythopoeisation easy, is the doctrine of *ṛta*, cosmic and moral order. The cosmic order, that is, the order governing the universe was thought to be controlled by the immortal phenomena which were thought of as having personality. When the original unitary universe became divided into heaven and earth, the original order (*satyam*, truth) governing it became divided into cosmic and moral order respectively. Thus the cosmic phenomena became fused in the personality of their representatives in the moral order, which was maintained by none others than the functionaries of the government.

2. Methodology

It is an accepted fact that the conflict described in many of the Ṛgvedic hymns might have taken place between Aryans and their enemies whose identity is not definitely established. The task to which

I set myself is two fold: First, to show the mythopoeic absurdities associated with the Asuras and others as non-existent in ṚV, it is essential to examine those elements which lent themselves to mythopoeism. Secondly, to establish their human identity, it was necessary to see if information about their way of life, their struggle with the Aryans, the means with which the Aryans wrought their destruction, and the destiny of the Asuras after their defeat, could be collected from the extant Vedic literature. The non-existence of mythopoeic absurdities is established through, what may be called, a rational approach to the interpretation of Ṛgveda. That is to say, although in general rational interpretation of Ṛgvedic hymns has been aimed at, a thick layer of myths persists, preventing the correct understanding. A reexamination of these shows that the Ṛgvedic hymns were composed to celebrate certain historical events. The mythopoeic element was introduced in the interpretation of hymns when the Aryans created a religion out of these events. This was done mainly through the introduction of symbolism and change of meaning of certain crucial words. They were twisted to give them derogatory, absurd, mythic, irrational, and fanciful meaning. These terms also have to date exactly opposite, respectable, realistic and meaningful connotation. When the terms are understood in this latter sense the events become credible, coherent and realistic. This may mean that probably this was the sense in which they were originally used. Avestan tradition many times preserves this sense, the possible reasons of which will be discussed at a later stage. The 'good' or the realistic meaning of the terms was pushed into the background and 'bad' or mythic meaning, tagged on to the word, gained currency. The adoption of the bad or mythic meaning led to the vilification and mythopoeisation of the Asura-tradition. Similar phenomenon is encountered in Avesta where the very word *daeva*, equivalent of Skt. *deva*, stands for demon and so are all the terms in the context of *daeva*. Thus, what is observed above about the use of words and the change of meaning is comparable to what is known to scholars of Avesta as Daevian and Ahurian vocabularies.

The fact that both the connotations of the Sanskrit terms are preserved to date means that probably they were used originally in this sense in Ṛgveda and that is why they fit in the context so well. In this sense, the method aims at interpreting Ṛgveda 'literally'.

The interpretations thus derived are supported by the complementary narratives in the Brāhmaṇas, which demonstrate the validity of the tradition that the Brāhmaṇas indicate the correct use of Ṛgvedic hymns and if necessary comment on them by narrating the events which form the background of the rites. At least some of the ŚB narratives are considered to be of legendary nature, probably older than the Saṁhitā literature, forming a link between ṚV and the Saṁhitās. It is possible

that they have preserved certain details which were not incorporated in the Vedic hymns on account of the poetic form.

However this change of meaning led to a fundamental irrationality in the Ṛgvedic interpretation. It is that one and the same term is given exactly opposite senses depending on the context. This phenomenon is very widespread and a well-knit structure can be observed. As a classic example of this may be cited the use of 'asura'. When it occurs in the context of the so-called gods, it has good meaning; when used in the context of the enemies of the gods, it assumes 'bad' meaning and in addition, it is also the description of Ultimate Reality (according to Sāyaṇa). This state of affairs is indeed baffling. The question poses itself: 'Why is it allowed to persist?' To which there is no other answer but that the tradition of Ṛgvedic interpretation and Sāyaṇa's gloss say so. As a matter of fact the rational interpretation ought to have long dissolved this dichotomy through the introduction of unbiased uniformity in interpretation. A uniform application of the rational approach dispels all the mythopoeic absurdities yielding striking facts which are unsuspectedly concealed behind the fine veil of myths. The difficulty of drawing the line between fact and fancy, experienced so often, also disappears.

The establishment of the human identity of the asuras and others is the logical outcome of this. To it are added the other relevant facts which have escaped mythopoeisation, completing the picture. When the emergent picture is correlated to the archaeological material found on the Harappan sites a further corroboration, at least of certain facts though not all can be obtained. The limitation here is due to the nature of the archaeological material which does not include intangible things. As the verbal commentary on things and events is missing, the remains alone yield only limited information. Contrary to this, the literary material can embrace every thing between the heaven and earth.

Thus this approach commends itself on the following grounds: a. It approaches the material rationally considering its verbal meaning which is also preserved and has come down to us. b. It can be applied almost universally to ṚV at least in the particular context of the wars of the Aryans and pre-Aryans, thus creating a harmonious, consistent and coherent picture out of, what is now, a mass of chaotic mythology. The ease with which the so-called Ṛgvedic mythology yields to this method leaves little doubt about the original meaning of Ṛgvedic hymns or what they may have meant to their composers. An objection may possibly be raised to this. It may be argued that the Ṛgveda was originally written as mythology and the 'bad' meanings of the words were original. If this is taken for granted, then the new approach or the interpretation s suggested should create further difficulties and problems. However, as

will be seen, this does not happen. Further these interpretations are supported by the archaeological evidence, disproving the interpretation of the Ṛgvedic narratives as myths.

The process of mythopoeisation may be reconstructed as follows: Originally the Ṛgvedic hymns, in the limited context of the conflict of the devas and the asuras, were meant to be taken in the (realistic) literal sense without any symbolism. They described the heroic deeds of their leader Indra and those who aided him in the conflict. After the conflict was over, when the Aryans sought to make a religion out of the events of the conflict, the process of mythopoeisation set in. During the process of mythopoeisation the original meaning (which may also be described as realistic and good) of some terms was rejected in certain contexts and retained in certain others. Where it was rejected, new connotations were attributed to them to suit the needs of mythopoeisation. This led to the present anomalous situation in which one single term has opposite connotation in different contexts. Naturally these new or mythopoeic connotations are of later date than the good meanings which are probably the original. The process of mythopoeisation is apparent, though in a subtle manner, in the Brāhmaṇas, which contain the detailed instructions and explanations for performing certain rites in a stated manner. Thus the Brāhmaṇas really perform the events symbolically and try to bring about the desired effect, which was brought about in the archetypal event, through magical power. Because Indra acted in a certain manner in a certain battle and was victorious, a sacrificer seeking to obtain the same result should perform the sacrifice i.e. the event in a symbolic manner. Thus history changed into religion. When the events became symbolic and were ascribed magical powers to attain certain aims, the process of mythopoeisation was complete. History was forgotten and dead ritual became the end in itself, only to be preserved and handed down. With mythopoeisation a corresponding change in the language also set in. This will be brought out in the discussion of the passages from Brāhmaṇas. Anthropomorphisation of natural phenomenon, the transformation of the concrete events into symbolic ones, and of the actors of the events into forces of good and evil were the various elements of the process of mythopoeisation.

Then these events were performed again and again as ritual actions. The emphasis on the victory of the gods naturally changed their foes asuras and others into demons. The process of this change is reflected in the many absurdities and indignities heaped on the asuras, thus depicting them as symbols of in- and un-human evil forces in the universe. Thus one may notice a certain emphasis in the following pages on demonstrating that the absurdities associated with the asuras and others are not really as such. This was essential in order to restore their human identity to them.

To establish the human identity further, the emergent picture was sought to be correlated with archaeological findings which may pin it down to earth. This was done with the hope of removing all the vestiges of doubts and their lingering shadows.

This method serves not only to establish the validity of the literary tradition but it also helps to put the archaeological findings into proper perspective. In the relationship between the Indus civilization and later Hindu religion and culture some absurd beliefs of the Hindu religion seem to have continued from the times of Indus civilization. For example, the *yakṣa* worship, depicted on a seal, in which the human figure in the tree is worshipped as a god, or the seal of the eagle with the two serpents indicating the existing Viṣṇu-cult. Probably these are some of the handicaps of the method of going from known to unknown. One tends to look at the material with a bias acquired from the known elements.

In trying to understand the archaeological material, I have endeavoured to restore the Indus valley culture to its legitimate position as the matrix of Hindu culture by separating it from the mass of pre-Aryan and post-Aryan elements. I have tried to locate the incongruities resulting from indiscriminate borrowals of the elements of pre-Aryan culture by the Aryans and their interference in what were clearly pre-Aryan traditions. In the process the true significance of pre-Aryan cultural tradition was lost and what was left was lifeless, fossilized and chaotic form which has plagued the Hindu society since then.

3. Genesis of the work

A few words about the genesis of the work may not be out of place here, as they have a direct bearing on the basic assumption. While investigating the origins of Buddhist Tantric ideology,[4] it was noticed that many names of the female Buddhist Tantric deities viz. Pukkasī, Vetālī, Śabarī, Ḍombinī or Ḍombi, Parṇaśavarī, Gaurī, Caurī, Caṇḍālī, etc. in the entourage of the chief god and goddess are identical with the caste-names belonging to the group called *saṁkīrṇayoni*, mixed castes, in the Hindu law books or the names of tribes mentioned in the various lists in the Mahābhārata, Bṛhat-saṁhitā of Varāhamihira, etc.[5] This finding was confirmed by M.N. Srinivas's observation that the goddesses of lower castes are called after caste-names,[6] thus establishing a direct link between a Hindu and a Buddhist social custom. The problem then became related to the Hindu social structure which formed the wider social functional background of Buddhism.

Further, I came across another passage occurring in an unpublished Buddhist Tantric text called Śrīguhyasiddhi, where it is said:

prāpya mudrām parām divyāṃ śuddhā sarva guṇālayām /
vicitrarūpasaṁpannāṃ śokamṛtyuvivarjitām / /
asurinnāgin tathā yakṣiṃ sūrim vātha kinnarim /
gandharvīm rūpasaṁpannām athavā siddhayoginīm / /
etā divyastriyoginyaḥ samākṛṣya prapūjayet /
.....
yadi vātha na śaknoti ākṛṣṭām divyayoṣitām /
piḍyte caiva kāmena tadā seveta mānuṣim / /[7]

"Having got hold of an extremely divine *mudrā* (woman partner), pure and endowed with all the virtues, extraordinarily beautiful, devoid of grief and death, an *asurī*, a *nāgī* or a *yakṣī* or a *surī* or else a *kinnarī*, or a *gandharvī* with a beautiful form or a *siddhayoginī*, these divine female yoginis should be attracted and worshipped... If it is not possible to catch hold of these divine ladies but, if he (practicant) is troubled by eros, then he should propitiate a *mānuṣi* i.e. a woman."

The passage mentions the mythic females as if they existed in reality which coupled with the findings about the names of the deities created doubts about the identity of these females as mythic beings.

References to these and many other mythic beings abound in Hindu religious literature, thus asserting their existence albeit insubstantially!

The Indus valley civilization was first excavated in 1922 and additional excavations have testified its one time existence over a vast area covering more than 1000 miles. The archaeologists are still not sure about the causes of its destruction which are attributed by some to tectonic changes and by others to the incoming Aryan hordes. More archaeological evidence is awaited to solve the problem finally. Important evidence has been furnished by T. Burrow[8] on this issue. It is proposed to show in the following pages that the ruins excavated in the Indus valley and beyond were once the towns inhabited by the peoples called by the Aryans, Asura, Rakṣas, Gandharva, Yakṣa and Piśāca. These were not the only peoples who inhabited these towns. They probably formed the prominent sections of the population. They resisted every Aryan advance and were ultimately defeated. After their defeat and destruction of their towns etc., they were dehumanised into mythic beings, erratic and unconquerable. The Aryans found in these peoples foes with whom they could not match in might. The struggle was so alive in the memory of the Aryans that from Ṛgveda onwards their poets were never tired of singing about it and their priests never stopped recounting it symbolically during the rites.

II

THE first three sections in this chapter are devoted to the discussion of the use of the terms *asura* and *deva*, showing how the present meaning of asura as evil was probably absent in the Ṛgvedic times. The associations of *asura* in Ṛgveda are traced, and the important ones are put into a perspective after a discussion of how the terms asura and deva were used in Ṛgveda. Usages in other lands, especially that of asura, are discussed in the light of corroborative material. The aim is to restore the lost human identity of the asuras in the conflict against the devas. In the 4th and 5th sections, the aim is the same. Here, however, the task is not as difficult as in the case of the asuras and others who lost their human identity totally. Dāsas, Dasyus and Paṇis lost their social status without the total loss of human identity. This is probably a milder misfortune in comparison to that of the asuras and others who were transformed into mythic beings inhabiting the world of fancy.

1. The terms asura and deva

The term asura has been used in both singular and plural. Asura is referred to in several short references in ṚV but besides these, two complete *sūktas* viz. III.38 and X.177 are devoted to Asura. In both the cases the obscurity is probably the testimony to their age. The translation, along with the introductory comments of Geldner, is cited below:

ṚV III.38: to Indra (?)

A cosmogonical sūkta intentionally kept obscure. In the centre stands the bull Asura that is the original god in whose service the other divine beings work (cp. v. 6). In his introduction—vv. 1 & 2—the poet wishes these beings designated as the seers—that is, gods or the divine fathers—as a testimony to his report (1), in order to ask them himself (2a) and thereby to make himself familiar with the secrets of the world origin (2cd); because it was they who built up the heaven (2b) and decorated it and measured it (3). They have prepared the appearance of this Asura (as the sun or heaven) in which he became the many-formed one. This

Asura is the proper creator of the world or, as expressed in the mythological language, he has borne it. The sons of heaven viz. Mitra and Varuṇa rule the world as kings (vv. 5-6). The seers have granted name and form to this original god, who is simultaneously the bull and the cow, that is creator and bearer (v. 7). He is identified with Savitā, and with earth and heaven whose praise runs through the entire sūkta (vv. 8-9). By the word original god, one seems to have thought of Indra very early. Therefore, the sūkta appears in the Indra-series, although he has never been named as such. The text is probably corrupt in places.

(1) Just like a carpenter (his work), so have I pondered this song like a prize winning racer who is well experienced and taking a run. Touching the familiar far off things (things of the mind), I, the seer, wish that the seers perceive it.
(2) Ask also the powerful clans of the seers. You have decidedly fashioned the heaven handling (it) well. This growing familiarity (?) which strove in the mind, has now come to you in the correct way.
(3) And they anointed the two Rodasi for lordship, while they left behind here their secret tracks. They have equalised the two in their measures and held the wide (world) in order. They cut the two great ones which were together to practise (lordship) therewith.
(4) All surrounded him as he mounted the (chariot). Putting on his insignia, the self-illuminating one moves about. This is the great name of the Bull Asura: he has taken an immortal name as Viśvarūpa.
(5) The older bull bore as the first, these his results [followers] are numerous. You, two descendants of heaven, you kings, practise lordship, in the spirit of wisdom from the beginning.
(6) You (both) the kings in your wisdom occupy the three, the many, all seats. I saw going there by my mind also the gandharvas in your service, whose hair are the winds.
(7) This is (the work) of him who is the bull and cow. They have supplied the companions of the cow with names. While they always assumed other asuric (forms), the magicians have adjusted their forms to him.
(8) This (work) of him, the Savitā can be to me none—when he puts on his golden appearance. With fine praise, (I bring) forward the two Rodasi creating all. Like a woman her children, they protectingly cover the creatures.
(9) You two carry on (the work) of the great and ancient one. As divine well-being you may be around us as many-formed protectors of the living creatures (?), of the immovable. All see the deeds of the magician.
(Note: The great and the ancient one is asura referred to in v. 4—Geldner.)

It does not seem plausible that the hymn was originally addressed

to Indra as is conjectured by Geldner. The reasons for this will become apparent from the following discussion.

X. 177:

(1) The eloquent ones see in the heart, in the mind, the bird, anointed by the magic of Asura. In the middle of the ocean seers perceive (him); the masters search the track of the light rays.
(2) The bird bears in mind the speech. The gandharva declared this, in the mother's womb. The seers protect this illuminating solar (?) knowledge in the seat of truth.
(3) I saw the herdsman going to and fro on his way, without resting. He conceals himself in the waters which run in the positive and negative direction and he moves to and fro in the creatures.

V. 47.3: The bull, the ocean, the ruddy *suparṇa* went into the womb of the primeaval father. He comes out set as variegated stone in the middle of the heaven. He watches over the two limits of space.

ṚV III.38 gives us a clear idea of the concept of Asura as the god-head and the ideas about the creation of the world and the part played by him. By its very nature this concept seems to be the earliest. ṚV X.177 concentrates upon wonder that is speech, whose existence in mind is unsuspected and which is seen as the magic of Asura. Magic in this context means the creative power (see below, chapter III.4).

The cosmogonical beliefs may be summed up thus: In the beginning the clans of the seers fashioned the heaven which was one. The seers were familiar with the heaven in their mind and the poet testifies that they have shaped it well. They cut (it) into two of which one went up high and became the sky. Thus the two *rodasis*, the earth and the sky, came into existence whom they anointed to rule the space. The *rodasis* were made of equal (expanse) and thus the world remained balanced. After anointing the two *rodasis*, the seers probably disappeared, leaving their tracks behind for future generations. It is not clear how the sun came into existence who is referred to in v. 4. But the identity of the two i.e. the sun and Asura is brought out in the same verse. In X.74.2, the Asura is said to have attained the heaven. Putting on his insignia, he moved about in the sky and is known as the Bull Asura. He assumes many forms i.e. in essence, he is the many forms of this world.

The oldest bull i.e. Asura bore progeny and his descendants slowly became numerous (cp. ṚV X.56.6). Asura, as the creator, has created the bull and the cow. There are many other things (creations) fashioned after the forms of Asura. All the creatures are born under heaven and

earth and protected by them. Mitra and Varuṇa are carrying on as the two kings the work of the great and ancient one.

As reflected in this hymn and V.47.3, Asura was originally a solar-deity, he was the father of all creation, moving and immovable. He is called the bull, which probably symbolised virility. Asura is closely associated with heaven and identified with the sun. In fact ṚV abounds in references to this phenomenon: I.131.1 where he is called *dyaurasuro*, who has bowed down to Indra, signifying the complete defeat of the asuras; in VIII.20.17, he is called *divo asurasya*, heaven of the Asura, signifying the close association between Asura and heaven; in X.56.6, he is described as the *svarvidam asuram*, to the sun-winning asura; in X. 74.2, Asura reaches the heaven at his invocation. The men of Asura (*asurasya vīrāḥ*)[1] are called the sons of heaven and agni is said to be born from the body of Asura which may justify his calling Asura father as in ṚV X.124.3. In the light of this, the statement of ŚB, which will be discussed later, that agni was on the side of the asuras and after having ensured a sacrifice, he went over to the devas, may assume certain meaning.[2]

ṚV X.177 describes Asura as the sun-god, besides accounting for the wonder that is speech-hidden in the heart or mind. In the first verse the sun-bird is said to be smeared or anointed with the creative power (*māyā*) of Asura (the god).[3] *Māyā* is usually translated as the magical power, illusion, unreality, deception and *māyin* as the magician. As is shown later,[4] *māyā* might have meant the capacity to create, form, build, etc. In the context of the god Asura it may mean the creative capacity, which is emphasized in III.38.4 in his name *viśvarūpa* and further in v. 7 of the same hymn. The sun-bird is perceived by the sages in the heart, in the ocean. They search for the track of the light rays. Now in the myth of creation, the poet intends to traverse their secret tracks which the divine fathers have left behind, after anointing the two *rodasis*. The seers in X.177 also try to perceive the track of the light rays (*marīcinām padam icchanti vedhasaḥ*). In short, the secret tracks of the divine fathers are what the seers are trying to perceive and which are referred to as the track of the light rays. The ultimate origin of these light rays is supposed to lead to the matrix of the universe, the one that existed in the beginning. Thus is born the concept of the ultimate reality. When one sees the natural phenomena as never-ending, the idea of immortality which is really a cyclic continuity is born. When an attempt is made to go behind this phenomena in order to know their functioning, one is set on the track leading to immortality. That a power, force or energy which makes these phenomena, especially the sun, function regularly and without failing, is conceived as the ultimate reality. Here we are face to face with a problem which has baffled the genius of the primitive man and continues to baffle us even now. In X.177.2, *vāk* (speech) is

being carried in the mind of the bird. The gandharva declares the secret existence of the *vāk* by saying "in the womb" i.e. in the secret chamber. This is disclosed by him to the seers who preserve this knowledge. Mind as the place of origination of speech is emphasized in AiBr. II.6.5. The speech which is not supported or instigated by mind is said to be the evil speech (*asuryā vai sā vāg*), used only in the metaphorical sense. But the inversion in the sense of asura, indicative of its later use, is notable. Originally, the speech was carried in the mind of the bird anointed by the creative power of the Asura. When it is supported by the creative power of the Asura, and not supported by mind, it becomes *asuric*, or evilsome. Further, the gandharva in III.38.6 is in the service of the two kings, the descendants of heaven (conjectured by Geldner as Varuṇa and Mitra); in X.177 he is the same gandharva, who reveals the secret to the seers. The gandharva seems to have had a direct access to the secret of the sun-bird which is Asura himself.

This great gift of the Asura i.e. the *vāk* is protected by the seers in the form of the illuminating knowledge, just as the Rodasi creates and protects all in III.38.8.

Unless these two hymns are read together, the conceptual basis does not become clear. Both the hymns emphasize the divine nature of Asura, and the ideas in the opening verse of X.177, *patańgam aktam asurasya māyayā*, cannot be clearly understood without being related to III.38 where the original concept of Asura is explained.

That the *patańga* is the *suparṇa* described in X.144.4, 5, there is little doubt. Probably the idea of X.177 is expressed clearly in X.114.4.5.

ekaḥ suparṇaḥ sa samudramā viveśa
sa idaṃ viśvam bhuvanam vi caṣṭe |
tam pākena manasāpaśyamantitaḥ
tam mātā reḷhi sa u reḷhi mātaram | |
suparṇaṃ viprāḥ kavayo vacobhiḥ |.
ekaṃ santam bahudhā kalpayanti | |
chandāṁsi ca dadhato adhvareṣu
grahantsomasya mimate dvādaśa | |

(4) The one bird has entered the ocean. He inspired this whole world. I saw him with innocent spirit in the proximity: The mother licks him and he licks the mother.
(5) The wise seers divide the bird, who is only one, to be many by the words...

That the ultimate reality is one but as it takes different forms, it is described by the seers variedly. If it is observed with a mature mind, the

matrix and its products will appear to be in close touch with each other (v. 4). In short, the two hymns (III.38 and X.177) are complimentary. While one describes the creation of the world, the other goes back to that experience of the divine fathers of unity prior to the creation of the world. This experience has become the guiding principle.

With the connection established between the creative power of Asura and the speech hidden in mind, the whole experience is brought within the reach of man. In fact, this supplies the missing link between the later yogic practices emphasizing mental discipline and the ultimate reality. With this in mind, the symbolism associated with the experience of ultimate reality viz. the blazing sun, the full moon, etc. become comprehensible.

But the important contribution of X.177 to the present argument is the use of the metaphor of the bird (*patańga*) to describe Asura as the sun-god. This will be helpful later to establish the relations with the symbols associated with Asura, outside Indian tradition. The *patańga*, bird, is said to be anointed with the creative power (*māyā*) of Asura. In v. 1, Asura is used in singular. Curiously enough, Sāyaṇa interprets asura in general as an enemy of gods. However, he glosses this verse as: *asurasya asanakuśalasya sarvopādhivihīnasya parabrahmaṇaḥ sambandhinya...māyeti prajñānāma...patańgam|patati gacchatīti patańgaḥ sūryaḥ...*'Of the Asura (means) of one skilled in throwing, of one who is devoid of any attributes, connected with the Ultimate Reality... *māyā* is wisdom... *patańga* that which flies means goes, the bird (is) the sun.' Likewise, *māyā* generally known as magical power, is used here as 'wisdom'. The tradition reflected in Sāyaṇa's gloss appears to support the interpretations offered here. This hymn along with the cosmogonic hymn gives us practically the complete concept of Asura who was conceived as the sun-god. If Sāyaṇa's interpretation of Asura as ultimate reality is treated as basic, then how does the meaning demon as applied to individuals derive from it? If it does in some cases, for which we have no evidence, why should it not apply uniformly to all? But as in the case of the gods, the basic meaning was probably derived from Asura, the Ultimate Reality, whereas in the case of those few individuals who had opposed Indra the term came to signify evil. Thus it means that the meaning in the case of individuals had changed. And the reasons for this change appear to be the later mythopoeic requirements.

ṚV I.163.6 refers to sun as the bird. Besides *patańga*, bird, *suparṇa garutmān*, i.e. the well-winged eagle is also associated with the Asura-sun. For example, in I.164.46, I.135.7, X.105.1, I.105.11ab the identity of *suparṇa* is expressed, the strong-winged bird and sun, the imagery reminding of the god-head that is implied: The beautifully

feathered one sits there in the centre of the innermost sanctuary of *div*, heaven. X.71.9 refers to the divine bird looking down upon the earth. References to the sun as the bird flying across the sky abound in ṚV. *Suparṇa*, with good wings, and *garutmān*, endowed with strength, besides *patańga*, who goes flying, are the three words associated with the sun in this capacity.

In most of the references to *suparṇa* in the ṚV (I.135.7, X.105.1, I.105.11, IV.43.3, etc.), the poet has the sun-bird in mind. The symbol seems to represent the wings of the bird which are considered analogous to the rays of the sun. This is clearly reflected in the motif of the eagle with wings spread out on both sides. In fact, both the terms *suparṇa* and *garutmān* seem to conjure up a single image of a bird with strong wings. The *divya suparṇa* is the sun in the sky. Probably the terms *śyena* and *śakuna* also refer to the solar bird.

In ṚV X.149.3 it is said: 'Afterwards the other holy one originated with the multiplicity of the immortal one. *Garutmān suparṇa* was definitely born first from Savitā and also, according to his ordinance.' *Garutmān Suparṇa* was associated with Savitā, the morning sun. He is immortal and one but is thought of as having many manifestations. The same thought is echoed in ṚV I.164.46: 'They call (it) Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni. And he is the divine bird Garutmān. What is the only one, the eloquent ones speak of it in many ways. They call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.' The reference to Indra may be an interpolation in place of Asura. However, the point to be noted at this stage is that Indra, the Aryan hero, appears side by side with, and in fact precedes, Varuṇa who was the representative of Asura on earth (see infra, chap. XII.3). Agni also was the representative of sun and essentially, because of the symbolism which is woven around the sun, Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa (i.e. the *sapta ādityas*) and the *Garutmān* are really one, but are perceived as many, and spoken of separately. In X.123.6, the *suparṇa* is seen flying across to the heaven, a golden-winged messenger of Varuṇa, the swift bird flying to the seat of Yama. A discussion of this hymn in the context of Gandharva seems to bring out older mythic material dealing with the experience of the Gandharva reality; it is also likely that the myth of creation was associated with Gandharva who is here identical with the sun. There are several hymns which seem to be addressed to *śyena*, eagle, falcon, hawk or are sung by *śyena* himself or as in the case of X.123 to Vena who is also the sun-bird. In the hymns addressed to *śyena* may be included IV.26, 27, and also VIII.100.

Suparṇa in ṚV I.35.7 is related to Asura: 'The eagle [*suparṇa*] has reviewed the air [*antarikṣa*], the secretly speaking Asura, the good pointer [*guide*]. Where is now the sun? Who knows it? Which heaven has its rays permeated?' The identity of *suparṇa*, Asura and the sun is

clearly brought out in this verse. The concept of Asura is clearly depicted on the Assyrian reliefs in which god Asura holding the ring and the staff in his hand points to a particular direction. This is represented in the above verse as the good pointer, the good guide. The hymn (ṚV I.35) is addressed to Savitā which, as will be shown later, is but one of the seven stages through which the sun passes and is also the functionary to represent this phenomenon. In v. 10 the golden hand of Asura, the good pointer, the merciful, is specifically mentioned. These traits correspond with those depictions of Asura in the bas-reliefs found in Assyria in the heyday of Assyrian empire. Assyrian reliefs are of later date (i.e. c. 9th B.C.). Since the descriptions in ṚV correspond well with the depictions, the concept of Asura and the symbolism associated with it might have been even older than Ṛgvedic times. Thus it is obvious that the minds of the composers of Ṛgvedic hymns were steeped in the lore associated with the religion in which Asura occupied the central place.

V.47.3 sums up the symbols connected with the Asura: the bull, the ocean, the ruddy *suparṇa* went into the womb of the primeaval father, although Asura is not directly mentioned. However, the reference to the primeaval father and the variegated stone in the middle of the heaven may point to the disc of the sun.

In later Hindu mythology, *garuḍa, eagle*, becomes the vehicle of Viṣṇu which may be the symbolic expression for the subjugation of Asura, the god and his human children.

Asura is referred to as the bull asura in III.38.8, *vṛṣa* and *vṛṣṇa*. The association of bull with Asura has assumed different forms. The sacredness associated with the bull in later Hindu tradition may be traced back to this origin rather than to the importance of bull in pastoral life of the Aryans. But more important than this symbolism is the frequent occurrence of the bull on the seals found in the excavations at the Indus valley sites. It was probably used as the symbol of Asura.

The use of *asūrya* and *asuratva* indicates that the poets were familiar with the concept of Asura, the god, and that they not only knew about it but held it in high esteem at a certain stage. This is amply illustrated by ṚV VII.21.7 where *asūrya* is used as an abstract noun in the sense of the status of Asura. The valour of Indra inspired confidence in the older gods for the *asūrya* i.e. the status of Asura. This is the highest praise bestowed on Indra by the poet. The *viśvedevas* (all gods) are praised for their *asuratva* i.e. the essence of Asura (III.55). This usage of Asura places it even above the Aryan gods and may have the dual implications given above.

Various other associations are found in ṚV with Asura in singular

usage. The term Asura is also associated with individual gods and demons. Amongst the gods Varuṇa,[5] Varuṇa and Mitra together,[6] Rudra,[7] Agni,[8] Soma,[9] Savitṛ,[10] Pūṣan,[11] Ādityas,[12] Aryaman,[13] Indra (I.174.1) and others are called asuras. Whereas *asuratva* is associated with Uṣas,[14] *asūrya* and *asuratva* are spoken in connection with Indra.[15] Further the term is used in the description of the so-called evil beings like Śambara, Namucī, Pipru, Varcin, Uraṇa, Araru, Svarbhānu, and others who are otherwise designated as Dāsas and Dasyus.[16] The term seems to have been used in the contexts of gods and demons. But its later connotation of unmixed evil, demoniac forces, appears to be puzzling. What has brought about this change?

As already noted, the Vedic poets were familiar with the concept of Asura as the god. The gods are addressed as Asura, substituting their proper names. For example, Varuṇa is called Asura in I.24.14; in I. 151.4, Mitra and Varuṇa together are addressed as asuras and so on. The term *asura* used in the case of gods may simply indicate a relationship between the other gods and Asura, the god. That their position was subservient to his may also be indicated. In fact, as is shown in Chapter XIII, the use of the eponym Asura may be indicative of the Asuric origin of the gods. Only in the case of Indra and Viṣṇu, it is meant as a compliment, as the Aryan origin of Indra and Viṣṇu is beyond doubt. Thus Asura, when used in the context of the devas, could assume good meaning. It could also be used to indicate evil beings which interpretation is found about 12 times in ṚV.[17] Its use to signify evil beings is discussed in detail in the next section. The use of the term *asura* in plural, and especially the phrase *asurā adevāḥ* in ṚV VIII.96.9 are discussed below.

I.151.3 invokes the asuras (in plural) who are said to be preferred to by the people. In X.124.5, asuras are said to have become powerless (*nirmāyā*). X.151.3 refers to the faith of the gods in the powerful asuras. Geldner's comment on this stanza lends support to the statement. 'The faith is here the faith in the superiority the acknowledgement of their power, which the later upcoming god-clans had created in the case of older asura-clans. cp. 10, 24. The asuras are here indeed the opponents of gods, *but not merely demons*.[18] Thus Geldner also thinks that the verse refers to the asura-clans i.e. asuras as human beings. ṚV VIII.97.1 refers to Indra's winning of pleasures from the asuras.

Now the expression *asurā adevāḥ* which is glossed by Sāyaṇa as *adevāḥ devavarjitā devadviṣo ye asurāḥ santi*, those are asuras who are *adevāḥ*, without gods (or) who hate gods. Geldner has also interpreted it in the same way. But the phrase can also mean, asuras who are not devas for two reasons: The accent in other cases of *adevāḥ* falls on *a°* and therefore the *samāsa* may be dissolved as *bahuvrīhi*, i.e. *na vidyate*

devāḥ yeṣām te asurāḥ, asuras amongst whom there are no devas. However, in VIII. 96.9 the accent is not on *a°* and therefore it is not obligatory to dissolve the *samāsa* as *bahuvrīhi*. It may be dissolved as *asurā adevāḥ na devāḥ* asuras non-devas (means) not devas. Secondly as the Ṛgvedic poets were familiar with the concept of Asura as god they could not have said that the asuras are godless. Clearly the expression tries to distinguish between the asuras and the devas.

Deva is derived from √*div*, to shine, to be bright. Thus the literal meaning of deva, derived from √*div*, may be shining, bright etc. and only secondarily it may mean divine, heavenly. Further, Monier-Williams has noted that even in ṚV it is used "of terrestrial things of high excellence". This is the fundamental meaning of the word. It is first applied to terrestrial things of high excellence. *Dyaus* is also related to √*div*. With this in mind, the relationship between Dyaus Pitar and Dyaus Asura on the one hand, and the devas on the other may be traced. In this respect the conclusion of Bradke on his work "Dyaus Asura, Ahura Mazda und der Asuras" are relevant. He observes, "...the formal position of the word '*deva*' with 'dyaus' indicates the relation of dependence of the *devas* on Dyaus and div and the epithet *pitar* shows the same authoritative place of the Dyaus towards the devas, viz. that of the housefather towards the family. Before the beginning of historical tradition, comparison of the oldest linguistic and religious forms... shows us the shining celestial god Dyaus Pitar as the ruler over gods and men, occupying the throne in the greatest majesty. From him originate and reside the celestial light-gods of the Indo-Germans viz. the Devas... Besides Dyaus Pitar, there stand the appellations dyaus, 'heaven' and dyaus, 'day' which in their origin and form are not distinct from it. We cannot therefore decide whether the devas in their original conception were—'children of the father Dyaus', 'denizens of the heaven' or 'the light genii of the day'; utmost probable, as I think, is that all the three notions rolled into one another."[19] Out of the three aspects of the concept of *dyaus* viz. day, heaven and father, the first is clearly the natural phenomenon, while heaven and father, or rather heavenly father as in VI.51.5 might be counted as later developments. These two facets are also present in the case of Asura, who is the sun-god and who gave birth to the progeny and was thus the father. In the same way, *dyaus* here may have been meant as the father of the devas, rendering the concept of Dyaus Pitar parallel to that of Asura as the sky-god and to whom the ancestry of devas was traced. It may thus be plausible that the devas mentioned in ṚV were the human children of their heavenly father who figures even now in the Christian prayers.

The Ṛgvedic and later tradition supports this. In ṚV X.53.10, the devas are said to have acquired immortality, *amṛtatvam ānaśuḥ*, implying thereby that they were not immortal before. ṚV IV.54.2 attri-

butes the immortality of gods to Savitṛ who has given them a large share of it. Even Soma seems to have assisted them in the task. They are to be interpreted only symbolically. Agni through cremation, Savitṛ through association with skies and Soma through its exhilaration or elation have bestowed immortality on the gods. ŚB X.4.3.3-4 narrates how devas acquired immortality. "3. The gods were afraid of this Prajāpati, the Year, Death, the Ender, lest he, by day and night should reach the end of their life. 4. They performed these sacrificial rites—the Agnihotra, the New and Full-moon sacrifices, the seasonal offerings, the animal sacrifice and the soma sacrifice. By offering these sacrifices they did not attain immortality. 5. They also built a fire-altar..." and they still did not attain immortality until Prajāpati explained the manner of laying down the bricks, stones. With the obvious emphasis on the magical power of a rite, the manner of acquiring immortality by the gods is described. In ŚB II.2.2.8, it is described in the form of narration of an event, whereas in the previous case it was in the context of the origin of a sacrifice. Although both the narratives are clothed in mythopoeic language, one may still note the difference between the two: 8. Now the gods and Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, were contending with each other. They were both soulless, for they were mortal, and who is mortal is soulless. Among these two (classes of beings) who were mortal, Agni alone was immortal; and it was through him, the immortal that they both lived. Now whichsoever (of the gods) they (the Asuras) slew, he, indeed, was so (slain). 9. Therefrom the gods were left inferior. They went on praising...hoping that they might be able to overcome their enemies, the mortal Asuras. They behold this immortal Agnyādheya (consecrated fire). 10. They said 'come let us place that immortal element in our innermost soul. When we have placed that immortal element in our soul, and become immortal and unconquerable, we shall overcome our conquerable, mortal enemies.' In the course of narration the asuras are said to have laid down their fire using it for mundane purposes, whereas the gods kept it in their souls and thus became immortal and conquered their mortal elements (11-14). That is, to say, through contact with fire, the immortal element, gods acquired immortality. After their death, they were deified through contact with fire in cremation. The reference to soul is interesting in that the mortals were soulless. Later concept of immortal soul had not yet developed and the term *ātman* had different connotation. Thus the ŚB passage gives equal status to both and in no uncertain terms does the passage declare the affinities of both of them. The devas and the asuras were both earthly enough to die, *martya*, subject to death.

It is noteworthy that amongst the Aryans not all and sundry were called gods. The social hierarchy (gradations) is well reflected in ṚV III.34.2 where Indra is said to be the leader (*pūrvayavā*) of *mānuṣas*, *viśas* and devas of this earth. It is an acknowledged fact that the ordinary

Aryan folk were known as *viśas* from which later the *vaiśya-varṇa* was derived. The devas were probably the higher classes. Later, in classical times, it became customary to address a person of high rank as deva, an honorific.

Thus now it is possible to interpret *asurā adevāḥ* which may mean asuras who are not devas i.e. those who do not recognise Dyaus as their ancestor. Since the juxtaposition helps to emphasize the contrast, the above interpretation as *asuras* referring to human beings seems possible. It follows from this that asuras in plural may refer to asuras the human children of the heavenly solar father Asura who is referred to in ṚV III.38, X.177, etc.

Thus in ṚV itself, according to the conventional interpretation, the devas and their opponents are in certain places described as human beings, (which is pointed out in respective places). How can this be explained? If the devas had been gods and their opponents, the demons, why should both be described as human beings? Obviously, both were known as human beings. These references are to be treated as the survivals of the original tradition in which they were known as human beings and their struggle as a historical fact. As a matter of fact, a school of Ṛgvedic interpretation is known as the historical school (*aitihāsika pakṣa*), obviously because of its treatment of this conflict of devas and asuras.

While these survivals provide indications of the older tradition, they are also a source of confusion. The later interpretation changed the meaning to suit the needs of mythopoeisation, whereas either through negligence or otherwise certain places continued to retain the original meaning. In short, they escaped the mythopoeic change. But the general rule that was probably laid down during the process of mythopoeisation was that when certain terms occur in the context of the gods, they should have 'good' meaning; when they occur in the context of the opponents, they should have 'bad' meaning. Since such a rule is observable, it indicates a conscious change.

The fact that asura when used in the context of individuals other than the gods indicated evil means that the context was the decisive factor in the interpretation. The 'bad' meaning given to it, when used in the context of individuals other than gods, was not inherent. The individuals like Pipru, Namucī, Varcin and others are called asura. Nothing in the usage of the term itself indicates any change of meaning. Only the interpretation gives it the connotation of demon and probably because these individuals have opposed Indra and suffered defeat. But iooking at the issue objectively, it may be argued that if the term can be used in the context of gods without bad connotation, why could it not be

the same in the case of other individuals? What seems to be plausible that probably the usage in the context of the individuals has something to do with the name of the god with whose concept the Ṛgvedic poets were familiar. Just as in the context of the so-called gods the use of asura may have indicated allegiance and subservience to the supreme god Asura. In the same manner the individuals also may have indicated their subservience to this god. In fact, it is a well-known custom amongst the Semitic people to call themselves after their gods. The concept of god Ashur and the use of what are called the theophorous names in Assyria are discussed in the next section. Here it seems the use of asura in Ṛgvedic times at least in the case of individuals is theophorous, i.e. the name of god forms part of the name of an individual.

The evidence in Pāṇinī may support this.[19a] Under the *parśvādi gaṇa*, he has enlisted a number of clans which are described as warrior clans. The *dhātupāṭha* gives the complete list in which asura also appears. The rule is that whenever the form asura is used (a prince) belonging to the asura warrior clan may be understood. It means that up to Pāṇinī the asuras were known as a warrior clan. Since the name asura appears even in ṚV, they could not have been different than the later asuras mentioned by Pāṇinī. The reason for the disappearance of this name later might have been the bad connotation given to this term in mythology. A more recent example of a people changing their name for the same reason is found in the piśācas who now call themselves Dardas (of North West Frontier Province of the Indian sub-continent) because of the unpleasant mythological associations.

Thus the evidence seems to point out that the term asura may have indicated during Ṛgvedic times a god who was a celestial and solar deity, and who was thought of as an eagle passing through the sky. He was considered to be the matrix of every thing and his followers called themselves after him.

2. Asura outside India

Besides the Indian tradition, the term Asura occurs in Assyrian and Zoroastrian traditions in variant forms. The variations as if reflect the vicissitudes through which the people who worshipped the deity passed. In India, it is pronounced and written as Asura, whereas the Assyrian tradition has probably preserved the original from viz. Ashur. The Avesta calls its highest god-head Ahura-Mązda, Ahura being the second variation of Asura.

The word Ashur, having two forms Ashir and Ashur, used interchangeably, might have signified in the early period a god, a city or a land. Later, it was written regularly as Ashshur. If the form or spelling

Ashir is taken to be the correct one, the name may mean, the beneficent, the merciful one. A-usar is yet another spelling which might have been the original Sumerian name. The Assyrians called themselves Ashshuraiu which is clearly derived from the name Ashur or Ashir.

Was the name originally used to denote a god, a city and its environs or a people? The linguistic evidence does not support its being used to denote a people or a tribe. The early usage which calls the city not as Ashur or Ashir but as the city of Ashur or Ashir, clearly suggests that the city was named after the god. The excavations at the site of Ashur have shown that the earliest remains belonged to a Subaraean population. The city was sacked and shows traces of a widespread conflagration. After this, the character of the city has undergone a complete change. The Subaraean population either had a civilization derived from south or imposed on them by the Sumerian rulers. Further, later ideographic representation of Ashur (the city) in cuneiform is suggestive of "the old capital" which may mean that the city of Ashur was so called for the first time after the Sumerian period. The sack of the city, populated by Subaraeans with Sumerian civilization, may be connected with the invasion of Assyrians, a people of Semitic speech whose god bore a Semitic name. Smith separates the Assyrians from the Akkadians. The Assyrians even before they came to Assur had their own culture and a distinct language which differed from those of the Akkadians. Evidence of a distinct civilization may be noted in (a) the status of women which markedly differed from that in Babylonia, (b) in the court of Assyrian king were officials and court etiquette not known in the south, and (c) in the Assyrian calender and dating by *limmu*.

The sack of the city, as has been shown by the excavations at Assur, and the complete breach in the civilization has to be attributed to Assyrians and not to Amurrus who continued to penetrate into Babylonia even after the time of Sargon of Agade but did not bring any of the items.

The early home of the Assyrians may be supposed to be "west of the Tigris, north of the desert and probably north of the Euphrates". From their racial characteristics—short, stout, with fleshy nostrils, fat cheeks and excess of curly black hair—they seemed to belong to what is called the Semitic speaking (race). But amongst the names of early Assyrian kings some names of non-Semitic character can also be traced, which can be attributed to the mixed nature of the population. The names in question are Ushpia or Aushpia and Kikia. It is then possible that "the Assyrian people were originally men of a race different from the Akkadians but so largely influenced by men of East Semitic speech and intermixed with them at a very early, prehistoric period, that a Semitic tongue closely related to Akkadian came to be spoken by them."

Such a population is to be found more in the Balih or Habur valleys than in the west. Besides these, another evidence is found in the month names of Assyrian calendar. The fifth month in the calendar is named after terebinth from which turpentine oil, a valuable product used as medicine in certain illnesses, is derived. Kuzallu, the name of the fourth month of the calendar, is a word denoting a kind of gourd. Both these form a part of the flora of Syria. When the calendar was first used, the Assyrians had known the use of natural products and were already engaged in cultivation, an activity possible for settled people and not nomads.

Limmu is the throwing of lot for the choice of official who conducted certain religious rites. By the very nature of the Assyrian population, which was composite and did not possess the natural unity of a cogent group, it was necessary to have a suitable leader. This leader was the *limmu* official who was chosen yearly and his office became degraded into a subordinate ceremonial office when kingship was introduced of which little is known.[20] This serves to give a fair idea of the antecedents of the Assyrians.

In early times, the concept of Ashur, the god, was probably no different from the very many gods who were believed to die and come to life at the New Year. Later, he almost became a counterpart of Marduk. The practice of *ded* or *ṭeṭ* column sacred to Osiris is also associated with Ashur and is depicted on the reliefs of Ashur Naṣirpal in the ninth century B.C. This ritual is also mentioned in a message to the king of the seventh century B.C. In this practice a bare-tree trunk, round which metal bands called 'yokes' were fastened and fillets were attached for magical purposes signifying the revival of nature in the New Year. The bare pole itself was also the object of ritual practices amongst Assyrians at times other than the New Year. In a bas relief of the early Assyrian period, Ashur as a tree-god seems to be depicted. This conception itself is the proof of its early nature and suggestive of the common source of origin of the three gods, Marduk, Ashur and Osiris.

The symbol of the god Ashur, the winged disc of the sun in which the god sits is shown over the *ded* or *ṭeṭ* tree and was carried by the Assyrian king in his war-chariot. The Ashur depicted in this disc is wearing a robe, the feathers of the lower part of the bird's tail replacing the lower portion of his body. He carries a bow in his hand and wears a tiara; with his face turned to left, the right hand is raised in a gesture of benediction. A possibility of a dependence on the Egyptian belief, in the borrowal of the Osiris column and sun disc of Ra both associated with the worship of Ashur is envisaged by S. Smith. The borrowal might have taken place at a very early period, even earlier than the Pyramid Texts.[21]

All these developments have taken place after the sack of the Sumerian city at Assur and before the period of Sargon of Akkad, who is believed to have lived around 2350 B.C.

As already noted, it is not known how and when the yearly leadership amongst the Assyrians degraded into a secondary office with the institution of kingship. One may guess reasons for it which seem to be the lack of definite mundane or politico-social duties connected with the *limmu* official. When this mundane authority was invested in another, naturally the religious office became, by the lack of mundane authority and purely religious character, subordinate. But the king remained responsible to the city god from whom he received the royal insignia at the time of coronation,[22] which is described by Frankfort in details. Having been anointed by the oil brought for the purpose by the king himself, the crown of Ashur and the weapons of Ninlil (Ashur's spouse) were brought and placed before the god on the seats. The priest then brought the crown and the sceptre to the king. While crowning the king, he invoked the blessings of Ashur and his spouse who are called "the lords of his diadem". Further he prays that "before Ashur, thy god, may thy priesthood and the priesthood of thy sons find favour". Thus the king not only symbolised the mundane authority but he was also the royal priest of the god, Ashur.

What did this concentration of religious and secular authority indicate? In Sumer during early dynastic time, the king bore the title, *lugal*. Besides this, names of many kings are preceded in the texts by the determinative of divinity, viz. *dingir*, god.[23] The practice was started by Naram-sin of Akkad and was followed by all kings of the third Dynasty of Ur except the first. The kings of Assyria used the designation "governor of Ashur", indicating thereby the modest status of the assistant of the city god. It seems possible that the use of the name of the god Ashur as a part of the name of the king represents the relationship at once subordinate to the god and also beloved by virtue of being chosen as his steward. Besides this, the deification of the king as practised in Mesopotamia may be another reason. This was directly connected with the religious rites associated with the New Year, in which the king was chosen to take the place of the male-god in the sacred marriage. The divine determinative was used by those kings who were chosen by the goddess and in this case the king would assume this determinative at the divine command without violating the relationship between the human servant and the divine master.

Many Assyrian kings had assumed the title of Ashur either before or after their names. It is not known if it signified deification. It started with Puzur Ashur I c. 1975 B.C. and seems to have become a fairly common practice from Ashur Nirari II (1426-14 B.C.) continuing till the end of the Assyrian empire.

It seems that the use of the term Asura in the ṚV in relation to the ṚV gods and individuals like Pipru, Varcin and others may have signified a certain relationship with the god Asura. Since Ṛgvedic poets were familiar with the concept of god Asura, there is a strong possibility of such a custom being in existence. Also the usage of the term is corroborative. When the word was used in the case of individuals like Pipru, Varcin and others it need not necessarily have conveyed the meaning of a demoniac creature. As the word could convey good meaning in the context of gods, it had good meaning originally and later tradition distorted it to mean demoniac creatures in certain context only.

A question arises about the chronology of the concept of the god Ashur because of difference between what is conjectured from remains of his temple in Ashur and what is found in ṚV. There is little doubt that the two concepts are related to each other; the *ded* or *ṭeṭ* practices mentioned above could also be traced in India in connection with the festivities associated with the new year. This particular new year is observed in the spring on the first day of the month Caitra, according to the Śaka calendar. The new year is welcomed by hoisting a pole usually of bamboo at the top of which a branch of the *neem* tree is tied along with a piece of new cloth, a small pot which is a substitute for a head of a god placed with the mouth on the top-end of the pole and a garland of flowers and sweets made of sugar-pellets and is worshipped with termeric and red pigment. This is called (in Marathi) *guḍhi*, and the festival, known after this special practice, as *Guḍhi Pāḍavā*. As has been noted above, in the new year festival associated with Ashur, both a pole as well as a bare tree trunk were used. The pole along with the branch is the substitution for the bare tree-trunk and the piece of cloth, flowers etc. are replacement for fillets, band etc. Besides this after the *maṅgala-snāna*, the auspicious bath, the believers are enjoined to take the leaves and blossom of *neem* along with jaggery. The *neem* tree grows wild all over India. The possible non-Aryan origin of the practice may be inferred by comparing the nature of the practices, associated with the new year, according to the Saṁvat calendar. The new year falls in the latter half of the month of Kārtika and is called Dipāvali, festival of lights. The theme of the destruction of Asuras seems to form the basis of the festival. The new year is observed by lighting lamps. The destruction of Asura Bali and Naraka is ritually enacted by trampling upon a small gourd called *toṇḍale* (in Marāṭhi). These practices seem to have been introduced by the Aryans.

Although the significance of the practice of *guḍhi* is no more understood, it might have been originally a practice associated with Asura as a god who came to life with spring and was worshipped to ensure fertility in man and nature. If the practice is really the same as that associated with Ashura in Assyria, it would mean that the concept

of Asura in India may at least be as old as the early Assyrian times i.e. after the sack of the Sumerian settlement at Assur and before Sargon of Agade.

The special uses of the tree of terebinth and a small gourd, and their importance in Assyrian life as evident from naming the two months of the calendar after them have been pointed out by S. Smith. Nothing could be said if the gourd used by the Assyrians and the gourd used in the Divāli festival were the same, indicating the symbolic crushing of the Asuras. In India, terebinth tree does not occupy a conspicuous position but the association of *neem* tree with the *Guḍhi-pāḍavā* as well as the knowledge of the various parts of the tree for medicinal purposes are noteworthy. Amongst its medicinal uses first is the juice of its green leaves, the consumption of which is said to purify the blood. The green stalks are used as tooth-brushes. The bark made into ashes can also be effective tooth-powder and so on.

But, as will be discussed later (Chapter XI.2), a conspicuous place has been occupied by the *pipal* tree, *ficus religiosa*, in Indian life right from the days of the Indus valley civilization. In the Indus valley the tree with its characteristic heart-shaped leaves is found not only on seals and amulets but was also used as a decorative motif on the pottery. Besides it is used as an ideogram in the Indus valley script.[21] All these uses indicate its importance to the Indus people. There may be certain religious significance too, as it appears mostly on the seals depicting mythological scenes and in some cases worship. Could this mean that the Indus people possibly attached equal importance to *pipal* tree as their brethren did in Assyria in the terebinth tree and the gourd? The change from terebinth to *pipal* tree remains unexplained. If the ancestors of Indus people had lived in Syria and had already attached equal importance to terebinth tree and its use, then why did they change over to *pipal* tree? Was it because of the scarcity of the terebinth tree in the Indus valley as opposed to the easy access of *pipal* tree? (*Pipal* tree grows wild all over India.) Or was it due to a change in belief? It seems probable that the belief could still survive in a change and replacement. A third alternative is the separation of this clan of Assyrians from the mainstream at a time when particular importance attached to terebinth had not existed and so any easily accessible tree could serve the purpose. The choice of *pipal* tree may be easily understood because its big majestic size provided protection from the sun, a basic necessity in the tropical Indian heat. The natural rejuvenation of the tree through the false roots growing from branches and its long life could match the flight of religious fancy. In fact, the phenomenon of natural rejuvenation could be easily connected with the annual rejuvenation of the god of fertility.

Thus the concept of God Ashur may not have changed fundamen-

tally. The validity of cosmogonic description given in ṚV cannot be compared with anything like it in Assyria for want of material. But the obscurity and textual corruptions in the Ṛgvedic hymn noted by Geldner may be the testimony to the ancient age of the hymn, which may in turn take the concept of the god Ashur-Asura backwards in time.

As has been already noted, the symbol of Ashur consisted of the winged disc with the god sitting in the centre, the lower part of his body being covered by the feathers of the bird's tail. This symbol of the god is not found in earlier levels in Ashur. Instead, the bas relief of a male god with branches all around him is found which has parallels in the Indus seals.[25] It appears that the transformation of the original Ashur in whom were combined Osiris and Ra, the sun god, started at an early age. The later tradition emphasized the Ra-aspect on the basis of which could be understood the close association in the symbol of the winged disc whereas the Osiris-aspect became comparatively less important. This seems to be confirmed both by the Ṛgvedic description of Asura as a sky-god and sun-god and the symbolisation of the latter by the mighty bird eagle. The Indus seal with eagle and two serpents probably presents the concept of Asura in which the anthropomorphic depiction had not yet reached completion.

3. The Relation between Ṛgveda and Avesta

The relation between Ṛgveda and Avesta is mainly based on linguistic evidence. The conceptual antithesis between the two traditions has not yet found a satisfactory explanation. Avestan scholars have noticed "more than one stratum" in the mythology.[26] If, as will be shown in the following pages, the conflict between the asuras and the devas took place on the Indus, then the basis of antagonism between Ṛgvedic Aryans and Avestan Iranians, as expressed in the conceptual antithesis of Deva-Daeva and Asura-Ahura-Mazda, would be this historical conflict. It may also be the answer of the descendants of the defeated Asuras to subsequent vilification of Asura-tradition in India. It seems that those elements of the events which later became mythological, representing Asuras as forces of evil, are preserved in Avesta in their realistic form and sense and as such represent the Asura point of view of the struggle between the devas and the asuras.

While this gives a possible explanation of the differences in the traditions, it also creates problems of wider nature such as the linguistic affinities of the language of Avesta. At present, it is said to belong to the Indo-European family. However, little work has been done on the comparisons of Avestan language with other, especially Semitic languages. In fact a comparison of the Ahurian and Daevian vocabularies with some of the more ancient languages may reveal foreign influence.[27]

The earlier part of the name of the highest deity of Avesta, Ahura-Mazda, is the Iranian version of the term Asura and the word means master, lord, powerful or strong, leader,[28] as also god. That is there is no trace of the evil implications generally associated with the word Asura in later Indian tradition. Further, the word is not only used as a proper noun as in Assyrian tradition but had assumed by now the connotation of a common noun also. The usage in Mahābhārat and later Indian tradition seems to be rather based on this connotation while at the same time it maintained its link or relation with the original usage i.e. the name of the deity. In fact, the use of the word even in the Ṛgvedic context is as an eponym for the gods and those so-called demoniac creatures. The contradiction in the connotation of Asura as good and evil may be a later trait, non-existent in the Ṛgvedic times. Looking at the problem statistically, the term asura is used with good connotation 59/60 times and 12 times with the connotation of evil in Ṛ.V.[29] If it had evil connotation, it would not have been used in the context of gods, especially Indra as the chief of gods.

The relation between Ahura-Mazda and Ashur is brought home by the use of the symbol of winged disc of the sun symbolising Ashur which is engraved above the fire-altar in the Agyari, the sun-temple of the Parsis. The winged disc as the symbol of Ahura-Mazda was firmly established around 6th c.-4th c. and is found on the seals depicting the king at the fire altar. The cylinder seal of Darius the great with Ahura-Mazda in the winged disc is dated to c. 500 B.C.[29a] A vase of Median origin discovered by Virolleaud at Ecbatana bears winged human figure and is dated to c. 8th-7th B.C. This depiction is identical with that found on a Luristan vase with the difference that the head of the winged figure on the Ecbatana vase seems to be that of a younger man.[29b] The Luristan vase is made of bronze. It is decorated with a human figure with wings. The figure wears a beard and probably a fillet. One arm is held in front of the body. This is described by Ghirshman as 'the proto-type of the representation of Ahura-Mazda'.[29c] Luristan bronzes are variously dated between 1600 B.C. to 800 B.C. The two vases are separated, according to Ghirshman, by about two centuries '(more or less)'. Thus the Luristan vase may be dated about 1000 B.C. The close vicinity of Ecbatana and Luristan to Assyria suggests Assyrian influence where the symbol is found earlier (see text fig. 4). Luristan was in the close vicinity of Elam and was probably the westernmost district of Iran. It was to the south of Ragha, the centre of Magian religion. The geographical location of Luristan may suggest contact and relation with Ashur and Ahura-Mazda cults. In fact, Ghirshman connects the depiction with Zurvanism and Mazdaism.

Also on the other hand, the Asura-Ahura relationship is confirmed by the use of fire in the fire-temple. The fire is said to have been gene-

rated from Asura and in the Ṛgvedic hymn, X.124.3 where fire calls Asura, father; hence fire was the element of symbol of Asura on the earth just as sun was in the heaven. The same practice is probably referred to in ŚB where he is said to have been on the side of the asuras but crossed the floor when promised the offerings. From this it may be conjectured that the fire was also associated with Asura in India too.

Thus this gives us a glimpse of an unbroken tradition of the cult of the god Ashura-Asura from about the 27th c. B.C. to 6th c. B.C. in India and outside.

4. Dāsa, Dasyu

In the Aryan tradition, only the prominent Aryans were called devas. In the same way not all the asuras and the Assyrians took the eponym Asura, although collectively they were known as Ashshuraiu in Assyria. There are indications that the so-called demoniac beings, the asuras of Ṛgveda and later traditions may originally have been human beings, in fact, a branch of the Assyrians, whose god was Asura, who called themselves after their god and whose kings and leaders used the eponym Asura.

Probably the view of Macdonell about dāsa and dasyu may represent the general ideas associated with them. "The word dāsa or its equivalent dasyu is also used to designate atmospheric demons... Primarily signifying the dark aborigines of India contrasted with their fair Aryan conquerors, it frequently rises to mythological ranks in ṚV as the line between what is historical and mythical is not clearly drawn. This is especially the case with individual Dāsas, some of whose names even (e.g. Śuṣṇa) lend themselves to a mythological interpretation, though others seem to be those of non-Aryan men (e.g. Ilībiśa)."[30]

As already noted, some of the individual foes of Indra and other gods are described as dāsa, in the ṚV, as e.g. Pipru (VIII.32.2), Namucı (V.30.7-8), Varcin (VI.47.21), Śambara (VI.47.21) and others and they are also called asuras, as e.g. Pipru (X.138.3), Namucī (X.131.4 etc.), Varcin (VII.99.5). In the case of Śambara, dāsa and dasyu has been used interchangeably (VI.47.21 and VI.31.4). Moreover, whether they are called dāsas or dasyus, Sāyaṇa always glosses it with asuras or vice-versa as e.g. his gloss on VI.20.7, V.29.9, I.101.5, I.104.2, etc. The generic term 'dāsa' has been applied to many of the foes destroyed by Indra or to their followers.

The dictionary meaning[31] of dāsa is fiend, demon, savage, barbarian, slave, servant, fisherman. The word is derived from $\sqrt{dāś}$, to give, hurt, injure. The two different meanings attributed to this root are so

different that the second meaning seems to be appended on to it whereas the first meaning i.e. to give, may correspond with the meaning of √*dāś*, to offer, grant, present, give, bestow. Amongst other nouns derived from this root is also *dāśa* (written also *dāsa*, probably a dialectical variant) meaning fisherman, ferryman, mariner. What has *dāsa*, mariner to do with √*dāś*, present, bestow etc.? This too seems to be appended on to √*dāś*. Thus the real contest is between *dāsa*, fiend, demon etc. and *dāśa*, the mariner.

The word dāsa may probably be derived from Dasa, mentioned in ṚV VI.21.11 about whom nothing more than that Manu was made his follower by the Viśvedevas (all gods) is known. Geldner in his footnote to the translation adds: "Dasa is the mythical clan-father of the dāsas or dasyus." It does not seem impossible that Manu's becoming the follower of Dasa refers to the myth of the great flood in which Manu's boat was led by the fish, who served as a boatman, to a dry spot. In ŚB I.8.1.1-10 Manu was advised to make a ship which was led by the fish. That is the fish became the sailor. In this sense Manu was the follower of Dasa, fish. The descendants of Dasa, the clan-father, called themselves the dāsas, *dasasya apatyam pumān iti dāsaḥ*. Putting together the two myths, it is possible to infer that the word Dasa might have either meant fish or mariner, fisherman and probably had some relation with *jhaṣa*, fish, the derivation of which is once again doubtful and its appearance in Sanskrit is as late as ŚB.[32] The significance of the term Dasa, fish or boatman suggested above and that of *dāsa*, sailor, fisherman comes very close. Dasa served Manu in the same manner as would a mariner or sailor (i.e. *dāsa*) do in the same situation.

In VS XXX.16, dāsa is offered as a human offering to *upasthāvara*, the meaning of which is not clear. Monier-Williams translates it by "standing near or at hand" and Griffith in his translation of VS renders it as "standing waters". *Upasthāvara* occurs between two other terms related to water i.e. *saras*, lake and *vaiśanta*, a tank. To *saras* is to be offered a *dhīvara*, probably a fisherman who caught the fish by killing it with harpoon as *dhīvara* also means a harpoon for catching fish; for the *vaiśanta* tank is to be offered the *vainda*. This is paraphrased by Mahidhara[33] as *vindo niṣadāpatyam*, and by Sāyaṇa a catcher of fish. The *niṣādas* are hunters, fishermen, robbers etc. The exact instrument or mode of fishing is not mentioned. It seems possible that dāśa refers to the fisherman who catches fish in the *upasthāvara* i.e. a semi-stationary (sheet of) water (like sea?).

It may be worthwhile to examine the term and the rite associated with *puroḍāśa aṣṭākapāla* for the term *dāśa* occurs in it too. It is a cake offered to agni in the sacrifice, whose antecedents are mentioned in ŚB

I.6.2.1-5: "(1) Verily by means of the sacrifice the gods made that conquest (of the world of heaven). When they had conquered, they said, "How may this (celestial region) be made unattainable by men." They then sipped the sap of the sacrifice as bees would suck out honey, and having drained the sacrifice and effaced the traces of it with the (sacrificial) post, they concealed themselves, and because they effaced (ayopayan viz. the sacrifice) with it, therefore it is called yūpa (sacrificial post). Now this was heard by the ṛṣis. (2) Verily by means of the sacrifice the gods gained this conquest. When they had conquered, they said, How may this... (same as in no. 1). (3) They went on praising and toiling; for by (religious) toil the gods indeed gained what they wished to gain and (so did) the ṛṣis. Now whether it be that the gods caused it (the sacrifice) to attract (or peep forth to) them, or they took to it on their own accord, they said, 'come let us go to the place whence the gods obtained possession of the world of heaven.' They went about saying (to one another), 'What attracts? What attracts?' and came upon the sacrificial cake (*puroḍāśam*) which had become the tortoise and was creeping about. Then they all thought, 'This surely must be the sacrifice!' (4) They said, 'stand still for Aśvins. Stand still for Sarasvatī. Stand still for Indra.' Still it crept on;—stand still for Agni! at this it stopped. Having then enveloped it in fire (Agni), knowing as they did, that it had stopped for Agni, they offered it up entirely, for it was an oblation to the gods. Then the sacrifice pleased them... (5) Now that cake which caused the sacrifice to attract (or, appear to) them, first (*puras*) bestowed (*dāś*) it upon them, hence it is called puroḍāśa. This same cake on eight potsherds for Agni is indispensable on both occasions (at the new and full moon ceremonies)."[35]

The threadbare relation between the narrative as the background of the sacrifice and the actual sacrifice is obvious. If the phrases supplied by Eggeling in the brackets are omitted, what remains is the story of the conquest of the dāsas. Mythopoeic elements and symbolism are superimposed on an event which, when denuded of its mythopoeism may be narrated as follows: The gods conquered (what they conquered is not mentioned) and wanted to stabilise their conquest by making the spot inaccessible. This they did by sucking the sap of the sacrifice and then effacing the traces of it by a post. This probably means that after the conquest they removed all the useful things and obstructed the access to them. √*yup* means debar, obstruct, efface etc. Probably they created barricades and went back to the place from where they had entered, where they noticed a shining object (*prarocayati*) which they wished to stop. As it did not stop, they put it ablaze. There are three elements which are either symbolic or have been given mythic significance and they are: 1. The sacrifice in the form of tortoise was gliding. 2. The sacrificial cake was the *purodāśa aṣṭākapāla*. 3. They threw it into agni as it (sacrifice) stopped by it.

Now *purodāśa* identical with *purodāśa* i.e. *puras*, first, + *dāśa* mariner, may mean one who was mariner earlier. Tortoise (*kūrma*) is associated with water and together with its creeping motion is symbolically suggestive of a ship which glides on water. The special reference to Aśvins will become clear later (see Chapter XII.11). But once again the reference to Sarasvatī serves to remind the association of tortoise with water. The gliding or creeping motion of the tortoise is also the motion of ship, although it is not mentioned. Nor was the tortoise afraid of Indra, as the mention of Indra's name did not deter it. It only stopped by agni. But what has it to do with agni? As will become apparent in the following pages, the devas were generously assisted by agni in their struggle with the asuras. The tortoise who is also the *puras dāśa*, former sailor, stopped only when he was asked to stop by agni. That is probably the *puras dāśa* stopped only when he was set on fire i.e. his ship symbolically referred to as tortoise was set on fire. By inference as the tortoise stopped by fire and was thrown into fire as an *āhuti*, likewise the *purodāśa*, former *dāśa*, was burnt to death. Why are the *kapālas* eight although there was just one tortoise? Although *kapāla* is the cake, it also has the connotation of tortoise shell and skull. The connotation of cake and tortoise shell are probably derived from its use in the sacrifice and skull may be the original meaning. Thus the whole narrative seems to be intended to tell the story of how the gods offered eight skulls to agni as offering. The eight skulls were those of the eight chief dāsas, though it is difficult at the present stage to point out which are the chief dāsas, out of the several names mentioned in ṚV. If the criterion is how frequently they are mentioned, then Pipru, Namucī, Śambara, Śuṣṇa, Cumuri, Dhuni, Arbuda and Aśna may be the eight. Briefly, the sacrifice on the new moon and full moon is symbolic and ritual enaction of the drama of killing the dāsas. One suspects that even the particular days chosen might have had some significance in the original events which can probably be unearthed by a detailed examination of the sacrifices.

The interchange of Asura and Dāsa eponyms may indicate the closeness of these in hierarchy. The enmity between the dāsas and Indra is referred to in many places in ṚV. The fortresses appear to have belonged to the dāsas also and are burst open by Indra. They are thus called *dāsīḥ pūḥ*, fortresses belonging to the dāsas. In II.20.7, Indra is praised for having burst open the dāsa fortresses which concealed the dark-people (*kṛṣṇa-yoniḥ*) in their interior. VI.20.10 refers to another of his exploits when he broke open the fortresses, the autumnal refuges, he killed the dāsa (clans) in order to render service to Purukutsa. As noted already, Indra destroyed many individual dāsas. He also subjugated the *dāsa-varṇa*, the dāsa class, and the dāsa-clans. For example, in II.12.4, Indra is said to have subjugated and consigned to darkness the *dāsa-varṇa*. The term *dāsa-varṇa* is used in a sense exactly opposed to

ārya. In IV.30.20 Indra is said to have submerged with his strokes, for Dabhiti, thirty thousand dāsas by magic power (*māyayā*) in sleep. As will be shown below, *māyā* here really means cunning. 'Submergence in sleep' might refer to the inundation of cities at night by the untimely artificial floods. In II.11.4 and VI.25.2, the dāsa clans (*dāsīrviśaḥ*) are said to have been overpowered with the sun (i.e. in the morning). IV.28.4 praises Indra for having made the dāsa-clans honourless.

Thus ṚV itself speaks about the dāsas as being human beings. Logically it follows from this that the term dāsa in other contexts also may have the same meaning and some of the asuras and dāsas against whom Indra fought may have been equally human. The logical and consistent application of a single connotation of the term divests it of the mythopoeic element.

The term dāsa, as has been discussed above, may have meant mariner, fisherman, sailor. In contemporary communities in Mesopotamia, the fisherman constituted an important element with two distinct types of membership—sea-fishermen and fresh-water fishermen. The distinction as retailers and wholesalers was also made.[35a]

The other term describing the enemies of the gods is *dasyu*. The dictionary meaning of *dasyu* is the enemy of the gods, impious man, barbarian, robber, and the term is derived from √*das*, to suffer want, become exhausted. The connotation is twofold i.e. mythologically, they represent the forces of evil and when treated as human beings, they are an inferior race. The term is used in a derogatory sense.[36]

Dasyu is preserved in Avesta and its equivalent is *dakhyu* which may be derived from *daŋh* according to Bartholamae.[37] The equivalent of *daŋh* in Sanskrit is √*daṁś*, to speak, to shine, to show. The terms *dasma* and *dasra* are said to be cognates of *dasyu*, the former (i.e. *dasma*) being derived from √*daṁs* (= √*daṁś*). *Dasma* has two sets of connotations: 1. accomplishing wonderful deeds, wonderful extraordinary and 2. a thief, rogue (which has come into vogue at a later date). Further *dasra*, a cognate of *dasma*, is frequently used in the context of the Aśvins and denotes accomplishing wonderful deeds, giving marvellous aid. Now the term *dasyu* may also be derived on the basis of the Avestan equivalent and the two cognates in Sanskrit viz. *dasma* and *dasra* from √*daṁś* but the current derivation is from (Skt.) √*das*. From √*das* is derived *dasa* whom Geldner thinks to be the clan-father of *dāsas* or *dasyus*. But if the Avestan tradition is considered, then *dasyu* derived from √*daṁś* may have the meaning of its equivalent which is 'province, land, often simultaneously also the inhabitants, multitude etc.' Semantically (Skt.) *grāma* is equal to (Ave) *dakhyu* the phonetic equivalent of Skt. dasyu and denotes common inhabitants of a place,

community or race, any number of men associated together. This is supported by the usage of the term *dasyu* which is often used in plural,[38] although the usage in singular is not lacking. In several places, it is used in a sense parallel yet opposed to that indicated by the term *ārya* which denotes the Aryan people *in general*. Both words are used in plural. Thus *dasyu* originally might have meant the community or race or inhabitants of the places which the Aryans invaded.

The Avestan tradition even records a term *dakhyuma* or *dākhyuma* which was the name of a deity of a land.[40]

The enmity between Indra and the dasyus is reflected in Indra's exploits. These are described in Ṛgvedic hymns which refer to the defeat and slaughter of the dasyus. For example, in ṚV II.13.9 Indra is praised for his 'cording up of the dasyus without requiring any rope' which probably meant that he made them immovable by killing them. In III.34.6 he is said to have crushed them, the tricky ones, by clasping them with his cunning. The same hymn (in v. 9) describes his slaughter of dasyus as a help for the Aryan race. IV.16.12 refers to his disguise (Kutsya, which could also mean a Kutsa ally) when he crushed Kuyava and thousands of dasyus. Indra had an armed fight with the dasyus leading to the latter's defeat and also probably to their being thrown into a common grave (V.29.10). The dasyus are described as over-powerful whom Indra put down (VI.23.2). Fire was used in bringing about their defeat. In IV.28.3, Indra is said to have killed them and fire burnt them down. In V.14.4, the just-born fire burnt the darkness with his light and killed the dasyus. That the dasyus were a clan to whom the devas were not favourably inclined can be seen from various references to them as faithless (*aśraddha*, VII.6.3) offeringless (*ayajña*, *ayajyu*, VII.6.3), without any rules (*avrata*, VI.14.3) etc. which obviously refers to the religious practices of human beings rather than demons.

It is likely that at a certain stage the term dasyu did refer to the common inhabitants of an area, who were defeated by Indra. They were some way related to the dāsas. In fact, individual dāsas are at times called dasyus as in the case of Śambara (VI.31.4), Śuṣṇa (VIII.6.14), Cumuri and Dhuni (VII.19.4; II.15.9).

In fact Indra was given the title *Dasyoḥ hantā*, the killer of the dasyus in II.12.10, VIII.98.6, IX.88.4. Crushing of Dasyus is spoken of in IX.47.2 and battles with the dasyus (*dasyu-hatya*) are referred to in X.99.7, X.105.11 etc.

The individual asuras and their associates the dāsas and dasyus who opposed the devas were converted into evil for their opposition.

Their very names came to signify evil. However, in other contexts the original meaning was retained thus presenting the phenomenon of a single term denoting mythopoeically the cosmic evil and also a clan. Since the latter connotation has survived, it may safely be considered the original meaning. Also as noted above Avesta preserves the term dākhyuma as a name of a deity of a land which supports our finding that the people called themselves after their god. Though ṚV does not furnish us with the equivalent of dākhyuma, the custom might have been prevalent as it is found in so many other cases.

5. Paṇi

Paṇis are by far the only enemies of the gods who have not lost their human identity as completely as their other brethren. In the Nirukta, Yāska has explained paṇi as *paṇiḥ vaṇig bhavati/paṇiḥ paṇanāt/ vaṇik paṇyam nenekti* (Nir. II.17). '*Paṇi* becomes a *vaṇij*. *Paṇi* because of bartering. Tradesman or grocer is called *vaṇij* because he keeps clean articles for sale.' Although Yāska has identified the Paṇis with Vaṇij, originally the terms had distinct significance as is reflected in the references in ṚV. The later confusion between the two might have originated with Yāska's explanation.

Many modern scholars have been kind to them as Roth, who thought that Paṇi is properly a man who will give nothing without return hence the niggard, who neither worships the gods nor rewards their priests. Ludwig and Zimmer accepted this view. Hillebrandt also thought them to be a real tribe identifying them with Strabo's Parnians.[41] Kosambi traces the descendants of Paṇis in the present Banias.[42]

Paṇis were closely associated with the asuras as is said in JB II.440 *atha ha vai paṇayo nāmāsurā devānām gorakṣā āsuḥ/* 'Therefore, the asuras called paṇis were the cowherds of the devas.' In ṚV V.34.5-7 and AV V.11.6, the Paṇis are mentioned along with *dāśas* and in ṚV VII.6.3 as dasyus.

The term Paṇi occurs both in singular and plural in ṚV. In X.67.6 its usage in singular probably refers to Vala who looked after the cows of the Paṇis, though Macdonell and Keith think that he may have been Bṛbu.[43] The plural usage refers to the Paṇis as a group which was characterised by religious practices which were probably opposed to those of the devas.

There are more than one references in which Indra is said to have deprived them of their wealth and the cows. The famous dialogue between the Paṇis and Saramā in ṚV X.108 also records the demand of

Indra for the milch-cows. *Mṛdhravacaḥ*, speaking insultingly, injuriously, used to describe the Paṇis in ṚV VII.6.3, may be understood better in the context of the demand for wealth and cows made by Indra and may sound a befitting reply to an unjust demand, even though of a conqueror. The confusion about the real identity of the Paṇis seems to be based mainly on two references: 1. X.108 where they are supposed to talk to Saramā, the devaśunī, the bitch sent by the devas as a messenger and 2. in X.14.10 the expression *sārmeyau śvānau* has lent itself to mythopoeic construction.

In ṚV IV.57.4-8, the term *śuna* is used to indicate good luck and the feminine form *śunā*, denotes the ploughshare; later usage has the connotation of growth, success, prosperity, welfare. *Śunā-sīra* are the names of two rural deities favourable to the growth of grain (probably personifications of share and plough). Thus *śunā* may have been the name of a community which was primarily agricultural and worshipped the deity Śunā and śuni may indicate a female member of such a community, the formation being similar to asura, asurī; deva, devī; gandharva, gandharvī and so on. Further the epithet may indicate that the *śunas* were in general opposed to the devas but this particular *śunī* joined the devas and was called devaśunī in order to distinguish her from her community. There are similar occurrences in other cases too, e.g. Viśvāvasu is called *devagandharvaḥ* in ṚV X.139, *devamuni* in X.146, the reasons for which are discussed below in Chapter IV. The term *śuna* is of doubtful origin and perhaps is to be derived from √*śu* or √*śvi*, of which the former is the weak form of the latter.

It may be noted here that Saramā is a proper name probably of non-Aryan origin as is suggested by its occurrences elsewhere i.e. Rāmāyaṇa mentions it as a name of a Rākṣasi; of a daughter of the gandharva king Śailuṣa and wife of Vibhīṣaṇa; and Vanhipurāṇa mentions it as the name of Kaśyapa's wife. In MBh I.3.2-9 Saramā is called devaśunī on the basis of ṚV X.14.10.

The Ṛgvedic hymn itself does not preserve any indication of Saramā's canine origin. The parties involved are besides her Indra and the Paṇis, human-beings as in VI.45.31, VII.6.3, VII.26.10 where they are described offeringless. The epithet devaśunī appears only in the *ṛṣi-devatā chandas* appended to every hymn at a later date. Even if the tradition is considered authentic, there is no reason why *śuna* should mean dog as this usage is not found in Ṛgveda and not until Mahābhārata times. The patronymic of a Ṛgvedic poet Gṛtsamada is Śaunaka (i.e. *śunasya apatyam pūmān iti śaunakaḥ*) and practically the whole of Ṛgveda Maṇḍala II is attributed to him. Curiously, though a descendant of Śuna, Śaunaka, is not considered a dog! This name Śuna has a long and illustrious history in ancient literature. During Mahābhārata times

śunaka was used in the sense of dog or its young one, but it was also borne by many as a proper name amongst whom were one of the Aṅgirasas, a ṛṣi and a king. The Aṅgirasas were companions of Indra during the raid on Vala. It is not impossible that Saramā herself was a relative of the Aṅgirasas for whom Indra had attacked the Paṇis.[43a] The term *śuna* alone occurs in the context of Saramā whereas in the context of Yama it is always *śvāna*. It is curious that though Saramā was a *devaśunī*, indicating special favour of the gods, her son or descendant, sārameya was not supposed to 'look at or gulp down' the sacrificial offering as is said in Mahābhārata I.3.2-9. In fact Ṛgveda (I.62.3) tells us that Saramā had agreed to find out the place of cows in exchange for a reward for her children. Does it mean that although a reward was given by Indra to Saramā for the services rendered by her, her descendants did not have religious status enabling their participation in the religious rites? In other words, it would make them a non-Aryan community not entitled to a participation in the sacrificial system like all other Śudra communities. The associations of ploughshare with the goddess Śunā, a goddess favourable to the growth of grain may be of help in determining the exact nature of the occupation of Saramā's community. They were probably peasants.

Now the other reference to *sārameyau śvānau* in ṚV X.14.10-12. The larger part of the hymn X.14 is devoted to Yama. X.14.1-6 are addressed to Yama, the god of death and the king of the dead. VV. 7-12 guide the departed spirit to the place of Yama. Yama is here called the son of Vivasvat. He has travelled through great water-courses making way for many. It is indirectly suggested that he is the first one to die and travel to the land of the dead. He has two *sārameya* dogs (*sārameyau śvānau*) who are spotted, with broad noses and with four eyes. They are always alert and they protect the way. They are his messengers who move amongst men. The material of the hymn is obviously very ancient and probably only mythic. Similar myths associated with gods having phonetically resembling names are current amongst the Cananites and Zoroastrians. In the Cananite mythology, the god Yamm, which name phonetically resembles Yama, is said to be a sea-god from whom Baal wrested the kingship of gods. Yamm also had two terrible messengers. He was obviously an older god who was replaced by Baal, signifying the incoming of a new population with Baal as their chief god.[44] As will be shown later, probably it was a custom in the ancient world to epitomise the defeat of the earlier people in a land by the incoming hordes by placing the gods of the new-comers at the head of the assembly of gods of the earlier population. This can be seen even in Ṛgveda.

The Zoroastrian myth tallies with the Ṛgvedic with certain differences. Yima is the first mortal and is described as 'a good shepherd'. He is the son of Vivaṅghat (Skt. Vivasvat). No dogs are associated with

Yima. However, the dog plays a conspicuous part in the funerary rites which actually enact what is said in ṚV hymn X.14.7-12. This is discussed below in detail after examining the general associations. Dog is mentioned with great reverence in the Vendidad Fargard XIII.II ff. Heavy punishments are enjoined on those who smite any dog or creatures belonging to dog kind (loc. cit.), because dog is supposed to be a creature of good spirit. He is considered an animal useful to man and created by Ahura-Mazda for this purpose. But the service he renders after man's death by driving away the Druj Nāsu which, if permitted, may take the spirit of the dead to hell, is most valuable. This is said with slight difference in the Ṛgvedic hymn where the two dogs of Yama are said to guard the path of the departed spirit and lead it to the place of Yama where forefathers are. In Avesta, the rite is called Sag-did and is as follows: a yellow dog with four eyes i.e. two eyes and two spots above the eyes, or a white dog with yellow ears (Ibid, Far. VIII.3.16) is brought near the dead in order that the Druj Nāsu flies away. The difference between the two traditions is that Ṛgveda describes a scene in the world of the dead, whereas in Avesta the rite is actually performed. Despite this difference the close association of dog with death, the common quality of four eyes, and the content-wise similarity make the two traditions closely related, probably descendants of one and the same tradition. The mention of the four-eyed dogs in Ṛgveda X.14.10-12 has been treated literally. But as the Avestan tradition goes, the four-eyes are really two eyes and two spots above the eyes. Geldner has also pointed this out. Considering the similarity in the two traditions, this might be the correct interpretation of the term.

Although in Avesta no dog is associated with Yima an indirect link may be seen in his being described as 'a good shepherd'. To a shepherd a dog is an important mate who helps him to look after and protect his flock. The dog in Avesta does protect the manes from the Druj Nāsu and prevents its being taken to hell. In Ṛgveda Yama's dogs also protect the manes and their path, leading them to Yama's place. Although elsewhere Avesta glorifies settled agricultural householder's way of life, Yima is called a good shepherd which probably indicates the pastoral origin of Yima, and also the stage of civilization whose product the myth was.

The word *sārameya* is so far being treated as a *taddhita* derivative of Saramā which appears to be rather doubtful, not from the form itself but from the context of the two hymns. It seems that *sārameya* is in some way related to Avestan *zairimyāk*, a Daevian creature. The term is obscure and of uncertain meaning. *Sārameya* obviously hides within itself a special canine quality. As the Ṛgvedic usage indicates the term *sārameyau* can be treated as an adjective of *śvānau* like *caturakṣau śabalau* etc., though usually it is treated as in opposition to *śvāna*.

Thus it appears that the two references ṚV X.108 and X.14.10-12 have to be treated separately as suggested by the context of the two hymns and various other factors discussed above. Saramā was not a bitch but probably she belonged to a peasant community with *Śunā* as their goddess.

But what is most important is that ṚV is very clear about the ownership of the cows. The cows belonged to the Paṇis and were robbed by Indra probably with the help of agni and soma (ṚV I.93.4; IX.22.7; 111.2; X.67.6). As will be seen below, the later tradition depicts the cows as belonging to Indra and were stolen by the Paṇis.

Before discussing the later tradition, the enmity between Indra and the Paṇis may be noted, which was probably the cause of later distortion of Ṛgvedic tradition. The sole aim of this distortion was to depict the devas in a superior and morally just position. In ṚV X.108.4, Saramā thinks that they should lie down dead, killed by Indra. That they themselves were no cowards is obvious from their words in the next verse: 'Our weapons are also sharp' to which Saramā sarcastically retorts by saying: Let not your bodies be available to arrows. In I.33.3, Indra is prayed not to allow any Paṇi to be against the devotee. Once again his wealth is mentioned and the context is that of driving away the cows. ṚV VI.20.4 refers to a battle between the Paṇis and Indra in which they were slaughtered by hundreds of strokes by Indra. The Paṇis were probably fighting on the side of Śuṣṇa. Geldner thinks that dasyus mentioned in IV.16.12, V.29.10, 31.7 might be the Paṇis. Probably he is correct as the episode described in these verses seems to be identical. V.34.7 probably describes the siege laid by Indra and his companions of a fortress of Paṇis in which were enclosed a whole clan. Their associations with the asuras, dāsas and dasyus are made clear. It is obvious that they formed part of the adversaries of the devas. No doubt they had amassed huge wealth, the source of which is not mentioned in Ṛgveda. They also possessed cattle which the devas coveted and they resisted every attempt of Indra and others to deprive them of their possessions.

ṚV I.62.3 also refers to Saramā's finding nourishment for her posterity, though the condition as stated explicitly by Sāyaṇa in his gloss and cited by Geldner in the footnote is not found in Ṛgveda. But it is not unlikely that Saramā, probably a peasant woman, did find out the location of the cows belonging to the Paṇis only with a promise of a handsome reward from Indra. This interpretation is supported by the narrative in JB II.440-442. The story is about the cows of the gods which were hidden by Vala. They send *suparṇa* who accepts their (Paṇis') gifts and returns to the devas without the information. When strangled by the devas, he vomits the share of curds etc. received from

the Paṇis. Then the devas send Saramā. "They said to Saramā: Saramā, you search for our cows. She agreed and set out (lit. moved along). She came to (the river) Rasā. This was that Rasā which retired from this side of the sea. To her, she said, 'I wish to cross, may you become fordable.' 'You cross me, I shall not become fordable.' Saying this, ... she moved in order to cross. She thought, 'What, alas, this *śunī* will cross me! I will become fordable.' To her (Saramā) she said, 'Don't cross, I will become fordable.' 'All right.' Therefore she (Rasā) became fordable. Saramā forded across. She went in across the Rasā where Vala had hidden." (Briefly, this may mean that the river Rasā was somewhere near the sea where at the time of the low tide it could be forded, a detail which may help to locate the river.)

The Paṇis also offer her the bribe as they did *suparṇa*, the other messenger of gods. She remains there without eating anything but obtains the cast off skin (*jarāyu apāḥ*), which she eats. She is approached by some one.[45] She sets out again. They ask her "Have you found the cows, Saramā?" Her reply comes in the affirmative. The cows were hidden by Vala inside the Rasā. "To her Indra said, 'Oh Saramā, you who have discovered the cows for us, I will make your descendants prosperous (*annādīm*?).' These are the Mācalā *Sārameyās* in Vidarbha who kill even the lions."...

For the interpretation of *śvāna* given above the last few sentences are relevant. Probably this is the quality of the *sārameyās* that is referred to in ṚV X.14.10. The reference to Saramā as *śunī* may be indicative of her social background as indicated by the name of the goddesses Śunā-sīra, who are associated with the share and plough, and hence with agriculture. In ṚV X.108 there is no element suggestive of Saramā's canine origin.

The version of the Bṛhaddevatā differs from that of the JB in that the *suparṇa*-element is absent, Saramā is shown loyal to the Paṇis and the narrative is made realistic. There seems to be little scope for verifying this version. Bṛhaddevatā viii.24-36 narrates the story of Saramā where she is stated to have drunk the milk of the Paṇis' cows which were hidden on the other bank of Rasā. When she refused to disclose the hideout, she is kicked by Indra. Having vomited the milk, she went back trembling with fear to the Paṇis. Indra follows her foot-prints. The Paṇis are called asuras who had hidden the cows of Indra.

The Bṛhaddevatā version is probably a later rationalisation with Indra being shown in a better light. However, Ṛgveda is explicit on the point of the cows belonging to the Paṇis. They were kept hidden in a hole in the rock and around it was erected an enclosure. As is said in ṚV I.130.3, "he found in the hideout the hidden treasure of the

heavens, which was shut in the rock like the brood of the bird (in the egg), in the endless rocks. Like that, which (in the contest) will win the enclosed herd of the cattle, has opened (by) the Vajra-holder, the highest of the Aṅgirasas, Indra, the closed delights in eatables, the closed doors, the delightful eatables." The cattle obviously belonged to the Paṇis, Vala being their superintendent over the cow-stalls. In fact, Vala is called the *rakṣitāraṃ dughānām* i.e. the protector of the milch-cows. In X.67.6, he is said to have been cut to pieces by Indra's words and the work of Indra was performed merely by his hand. Vala without making much effort to protect the cows, probably out of sheer fright of Indra's stroke (ṚV III.30.10) opened the cow-stalls and made the cows free so that they could be driven out. Probably at this stage he gave the cry to the Paṇis: 'Your cows are robbed.' Furthermore, no armed battle seems to have been fought for the sake of these cows hidden in a rocky enclosure. It was rather the battle of words as is said in ṚV VI.39.2.

This same tradition represented in JB passage discussed above affords a good illustration of the mythopoeic construction and the distortion of facts to that end. The cows belonged to the Paṇis which is stated factually in ṚV, whereas JB makes the Paṇis the cowherds of the gods implying thereby a sort of rebellion of the Paṇis, the servants, against the devas, the masters—*Paṇayo nāmāsurā devānāṃ gorakṣā āsan|*

The Aṅgirasas seem to have played a crucial part in the robbing of the cows. Ṛgveda presents us with a compact between Indra and the Aṅgirasas. In VI.18.5 Indra makes confession of an old friendship with the Aṅgirasas for whom he killed Vala and released the cows. The same compact is also referred to in VI.39.2 as an alliance with the right knowledge and with the right binding (?) for fulfilling the desire for the enclosed cows. Indra was accompanied by the Aṅgirasas on his search for the cows, who were delivered to them after the discovery. The reference to the praise of Indra by the Aṅgirasas for uncovering the darkness for the Uṣas, the sun and the cattle (I.62.5, VI.17.5 etc.) may be treated as metaphorical, suggesting that the cows were hidden behind the rocks on whom the sun shone as it did also on the rocky cave.

It is obvious that the Paṇis had amassed their wealth in the form of the cattle hidden far away beyond the river Rasā in the ridge, supposed to be invincible. Although the spot was not commonly known, yet the people in that area had a vague idea of its existence, on the basis of which Saramā could trace it. It appears that both Saramā and the Aṅgirasas betrayed the Paṇis for their own personal gains.

In assuming the Paṇis as identical with Vaṇij or the Bania community in Uttara Pradesh, known for their money-lending against mortgages, the evidence of Nirukta may be decisive. Ṛgveda tells little

about the profession of the Paṇis, except their bargaining attitude. The significant piece of information comes from the terms derived from this word at a later stage. Not only *√paṇ*, to barter, purchase, buy, risk, hazard, appears later, but a host of words like *paṇa* (n), a particular measure, a handful (Pāṇinī, iii.3.66), *āpaṇa*, market, shop, commerce, trade; *āpaṇika*, mercantile, relating to trade, traffic etc. and in masculine, a merchant, dealer, shopkeeper; *paṇya*, to be bought, sold, transacted, an article of trade, a ware, a commodity are also found. This may mean that the word *paṇ* was obviously foreign to Indo-Aryan, but an artificial *√paṇ* was formed subsequently. This may be indicative of the lack of this economic activity as a part of Aryan social organisation at the time of their arrival in India.

Besides the Paṇis, another class of merchants called the Vaṇij is mentioned in Ṛgveda twice: I.112.11 and V.45.6. Both the references seem to suggest the same incident in which the Aśvins assisted a Vaṇij, a trader, called Dīrghaśravas the son of Uśij, by streaming forth a vat of honey. Ordinarily, a vat of honey is not such a memorable gift. Since it is counted amongst the best deeds of the Aśvins, it probably had some special significance for the Vaṇij.

Another description of Vaṇij in the Daśabrāhmaṇa Jātaka gives some idea of the articles of trade: "myrobalans, mango and jack fruits, *vibhitaka* nuts, *lakuca* fruits, toothpicks, *bilva* fruits, and planks, *rājāyataṇa* wood, baskets made of sugar, scents, honey and ointment, the most diverse wares they sell..."[46] These articles of medicinal value and daily use might have been bartered against small exchanges. Above list from the Jātaka where the items of trade are enumerated also contains honey. This may explain the special reference to the supply of honey provided to the Vaṇij. Honey may have been one of the important items of trade. An important detail about the activities of the Vaṇij is furnished in ṚV V.45.6 where he is said to be rushing around for the source. The reference is too cryptic to give any idea of the profession of Vaṇij. It seems probable that in his enterprise he collected supplies from the places where they are produced or grown to deliver where they are not available but are in demand. Both the terms paṇi and vaṇij appear to have originated from a single word. Let us consider the term paṇi. The later associations with the root *paṇ*, from which paṇi is supposed to have been derived, are that of sell, bargain, wager etc. and the term vaṇij means a grocer. The identity of both these terms is brought out by Yāska when he says *paṇi vaṇij bhavati*/ paṇi becomes vaṇij.

The Buddhist and the Jain traditions are also identical. According to the former *paṇa* means shop; *paṇaḥ*, to sell, barter, bargain, risk, bet; *paṇītaka*, staked, wagered, bet, wager, stake at play; *paṇiya*, to be sold or bought, vendible, article of trade.[47]

In the Jain tradition is preserved *paṇia* meaning an article fit for sale, traffic, exchange, trade, condition, wage, and a kind of gamble. *Paṇiya-bhumi* (*bhūmī*) is described as a non-Aryan land where Mahāvīra had spent four months.[48] The last reference appears in Kappasutta I.122, in a series of places visited by Mahāvīra in Bihara from Vaiśāli to Pāvā. It also mentions a Vaṇiyagāma as part of Vaiśāli nagari. The term vaṇij also occurs in both the traditions. In Pali, *vaṇibbaka*, wayfarer, travelling merchant, *vaṇijja*, trade, trading, *vaṇija*, a merchant, trader are recorded.[49] Ardhamagadhi preserves *vaṇi* or *vaṇia* meaning *bania*, merchant; *vaṇij* or *vaṇijja*, trade, traffic; *vaṇia* or *vaṇiaya*, *bania* or merchant.[50] On the whole the tradition seems to be persistent about the mercantile associations of paṇi and vaṇij, though √*paṇ* might be a back-formation from paṇi. Ṛgveda does not give any indication of how the Paṇis came to acquire the wealth which was the target of jealousy. If the later tradition as recorded in the Brāhmaṇas and the Mahābhārata is taken to be the basis, paṇi may literally mean a trader or a merchant who did his business carefully to the extent of being called niggardly bargainer and also ran a risk for more earning. As has been already noted, the Ṛgveda does not help us much in the correct understanding of the word. Let us examine the contemporary scene in Assyria. There between 1941-1902 B.C. a novel practice was begun by King Erishum. It was as follows: In trade on a large scale the main financiers were 'private bankers who accordingly bore the main risk of the long haul of merchant from Ashur to the various cities in Asia Minor, but who also earned considerable profits if the transaction was successful. On principle the business was carried out as follows: The banker entrusted a certain amount of capital frequently two minas of gold or a multiple of this amount to a commercial traveller or one of the merchants who set out from Ashur to settle for several years in the distant province. The recipient of the capital pledged himself to return twice the amount which was designated as his 'sack' or 'pauch', after specified number of years, usually after four years. If any profits beyond the amount he had to pay back accrued to the salesman, they were divided between the contracting parties at a specified ratio, either 1 : 1 or 1 : 2.'[51] Those who were employed for the trip like the drivers, messengers etc. were also paid small capital which they were free to employ as they saw fit. They were to pay back the amount at the end of the journey. The profit they made was the payment of their labour.

The social and economic practices represented by *tamkarum* (Akk.) (Sum. *damkar*) go back to the Old Sumerian times in the reigns of Lugalanda and Urukagina of Lagash. The *tamkarum* in the Old Babylonian period travelled abroad carrying on his trade and visiting foreign markets where he traded, inter alia, in the slaves. In Ur III period (2180-1960 B.C.) he functioned as money-lender and giver of credit. He also supplied big loans against mortgage of land, and lent barley too.

He transacted buying and selling business through his agents and financed trading enterprises. These functions of *tamkarum* closely resemble those of the banias in present days. Besides these the *damkars* were doubtlessly in the service of government in Ur III period and also owned private property of their own.[52]

It appears that the Paṇis—with the warning that our evidence here is later than Ṛgvedic times and solely the meaning of √*paṇ*—were the Indian counterparts of the Assyrian private bankers who supplied the capital, and got it repaid, charged compound interest on it (that is double the amount in four years) and shared the incurred profits. The Indian Bania even now and especially the Marwadis from Rājasthāna are well known for this type of transaction. They go from remote villages of Rājasthāna to Mahārāshtra and other provinces with a small brass drinking pot (*loṭā*) and a staff and amass huge fortunes by starting first small grocery shops and later by advancing small sums against precious metals, landed property etc. Their greed knows no bounds as also their tricks to exploit the unsuspecting illiterate village folks. The Paṇis were probably the private bankers who did not actually participate in the small trade. This custom is still current in Uttar Pradesh. The vaṇij was poorer but enterprising and ambitious trader who travelled from place to place selling his goods, as is depicted in Ṛgveda and the Jātaka. The present descendants of Paṇis or Banias, as they are now known, are also money-lenders but without risk. Incidentally, this custom throws light on the meaning of √*paṇ*, to risk, to wager, to bet. Supplying capital to a trader on the basis of a mere future promise must have been a considerable risk. This in turn will explain the harping on the fulfilment of promise and keeping up contract by Mitra in ṚV.[53]

The different functions performed by Paṇi, Vaṇij, and Dāsa in an economic enterprise may be envisaged as follows. The paṇi was probably the banker who advanced the necessary capital with the promise of return along with a share in the net profit. Vaṇij was the travelling merchant who travelled primarily concerning himself with the distribution of certain staples, the retailing of cheap manufactured goods as well as with the inter-urban exchange of merchandise. Mesopotamian economy also had a counterpart of the vaṇij who performed similar functions. The dāsas as sailors and fishermen probably participated in the overseas trade of highly priced luxurious and other goods, and also in the fish trade. The dāsas had the technical skill needed for the long sea-voyage and probably also acquired the personal contact for accredition. Though the paṇis depended on both the vaṇij and the dāsas for completing the enterprise each performed an important function in the series of transactions.

All this does not throw much light on the origin of the word Paṇi and Vaṇij. Probably they are derived from the same word.

One problem, however, remains unanswered and that is the cows associated with the Paṇis. If the Paṇis were bankers and tradesmen, why did they maintain the cowherds? Was it the way of keeping their wealth? It is not unlikely that the cows constituted wealth, besides precious metals. A passage from Bhagavadgītā (XVIII.44) may help us to understand this combination of occupations: *kṛṣigaurakṣyavāṇijyaṁ vaiśyakarma svabhāvajam|* The natural profession of a *vaiśya* is agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade. Although this does not imply the existence of caste system during Ṛgvedic times or in Paṇis' social structure, it is curious that with the caste which later indicated trading as profession should be associated agriculture and pastoral pursuits. Probably the practice was older and Paṇis also observed it.

As has been shown above, it is possible to penetrate through the veil of so-called mythology in order to arrive at the reality. The process as reflected in the above discussion may be described as follows: The Ṛgvedic hymns dealt with human beings and their activities especially the struggle between the non-Aryans and Aryans. At a later stage when the Aryans decided to transform the struggle into a religion, the Aryans arrogated to themselves, as conquerors, the position of good, represented by the gods. It fell to the lot of the non-Aryans to represent the evil, the demoniac forces in the universe. As will be shown later, this very idea of the struggle between good and evil and the god fighting for the good is non-Aryan. At present we may confine ourselves to understanding the process through which the transformation of terrestrial events was brought about. A phenomenon which seems to be used on a large scale is the change in the significance of the names of people as has been discussed in this chapter, thus making them represent evil or if not, at least giving the terms derogatory connotations. The discussions that follow will also bear this out. Since the phenomenon occurs on such a large scale, there is every likelihood of its being the product of a conscious effort and this effort was the creation of the new religion out of events which actually took place.

The only social purpose this mythopoeisation seems to have served is the fusion of the victor and the vanquished in one system. This could still be questioned in the light of the prohibition to practise the Vedic religion by the *śūdras*, the class which contained the largest non-Aryan element (see Chapter XI.11). The other and even more dubious purpose might be the commemoration of Aryan victory. As time has shown, the memory of the Aryan victory was lost in the maze of mythology, probably within a few centuries itself.

It may be worthwhile to discuss the method used in arriving at these conclusions. As may be already apparent, the method consists first in bringing together all the meanings of a word. In the case of

nominal derivations from verbal roots, it is assumed that the meanings of the root and derivations from it may be integrally related. If the meaning cannot be satisfactorily derived, the deriving root is sought elsewhere. In many cases, as will be seen subsequently, it is not found necessary to look for roots elsewhere. The same root may have two opposite connotations. Although the possibility of a conscious effort in this linguistic change cannot be altogether eschewed, these words were probably borrowed into Sanskrit from a non-Aryan language. Originally their meaning was known; later it was either forgotten or ignored deliberately. After some centuries, however, when this was noticed, an effort was made to enlist them and that is how the Nighaṇṭus came into existence. As has been suggested above if the original meanings had been deliberately ignored in view of the new connotations attributed to them, it would further corroborate the hypothesis of the conscious effort. Further the borrowed words were tagged on to new roots many times artificially created at a later stage, to suit the new connotations.

The possibility of an evolutionary or natural change within the language itself seems to be eschewed because of the existence of a vast amount of ritualistic literature in the form of Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas which re-enacts the events of the conflict between the Aryans and the non-Aryans. The creation of this literature in which the events, the ritual and the expected magical effect are juxtaposed cannot be anything else except a conscious creation.

These problems will be commented upon when they come up in the subsequent discussions.

III

THIS chapter will cover various phases of the conflict of the devas and the asuras, as described both in Ṛgveda and the Brāhmaṇas. Even the mythopoeic elements associated with Indra and Viṣṇu are discussed in detail to show that what appears to be mythopoeic in Aryan context is not really so. Elements which were transformed into natural phenomena for some reason or were obscure enough to become incomprehensible to later generations, gave rise to mythopoeic constructions.

In the subsequent chapters, the partners of the asuras, viz. gandharvas, yakṣas, rakṣas and piśācas are given similar treatment. As will be observed, in the case of each of these beings, there is evidence of conflict.

1. The conflict of the devas and the asuras

Right from the earliest stratum of ṚV the indications of the conflict between the devas and the asuras are found in abundance. It does not end in the Ṛgveda but continues into the Brāhmaṇas, in the Śrauta literature, in the Mahābhārata and a reference to it is found even in the chronicles of Alexander's historian. The initial stages of the conflict as reflected in Ṛgveda and their religious transformation into Brahmanic ritual show its all-pervading and excruciating character. Though the events took place in the past, yet they seemed to have been fresh in the minds of the poets at the time of narration. Even in the days of the Brāhmaṇas, the victory of the devas and the defeat of the asuras was fresh enough to be enacted through the rituals and remote enough to be the basis for the belief in the magical efficacy. On the one hand, the asuras inspired admiration in the devas but on the other, they were hated for exactly those qualities which inspired admiration.

The earliest description available to us is in ṚV in the prayers addressed to Indra in which he is extolled for the destruction of the asuras. From the praises bestowed on him it is possible to understand the gravity of the conflict and the anxiety it caused to the devas.

Practically in every hymn addressed to Indra, superlatives are

heaped on him for his valour displayed n the battles with the asuras. He is called *śatakratu*, having a hundred powers (which occurs more than 60 times and with two exceptions solely limited to him), *śactpati śacnīām*, the mighty lord of might or Śacī (i.e. Indıāṇi), of irresistible strength (*apratidhṛṣṭaśavasam*, I.84.2), of unbounded force (I.11.4; 102.6 etc.) and many other commoner epithets like *śūra* (heroic), *tura* (quick), *tavas* (stronge etc. He is said to have filled heaven and earth with his varied heroic powers (III.54.15). His greatness was such that he was called the universal monarch (IV.19.2 etc.) and also a self-dependent sovereign (*eko viśvasya bhuvanasya rājā*, III.46.2 etc.). His grandeur even surpassed those of the older gods who placed their confidence in him for the status of Asura (*asuryāya*) for the lordship, for their strength, for dominion (VII.21.7). The praise does not stop here—he is said to have subjected the Asura of the sky (*Indrāya hi dyaur asuro anamnata*, I.131.1). Probably this is the highest praise bestowed on him.

Most of the hymns addressed to Indra enumerate his heroic deeds which are praised by the poets in unstinted terms. They often refer to the destruction of Vṛtra which by far has been the most important event and won for Indra the epithets Vṛtrahā, Vṛtrahan, Vṛtraghna, Vṛtratūrya, Vṛtrakhāda which are strewn over the ṚV.

Vṛtra is said to be the serpent who was covering the waters which Indra released by killing the ragon. On account of this valorous deed, he is called the winner of the waters, *apsujit*. The Vṛtra-episode is discussed in greater details later (see Chapter XII.15) but here some aspects of it are dealt with.

The mythology associated with Vṛtra is that he was a demon of drought, that he was a dragon or serpent who lay covering the waters and the event of his defeat is narrated in detail in ṚV I.32. The term Vṛtra is traditionally derived from √*vṛ*, to cover, hide, conceal etc. But the same √*vṛ* also means to ward off, check, prevent, keep back, hinder etc. Thus in the latter sense Vṛtra may mean one who wards off, checks. Ahi seems to be a proper name, and there are cases of its use as a proper name in non-Aryan tradition; the non-Aryan origin of Vṛtra is stressed by calling him Dānava (ṚV II.11.10, V.29.4, V.32.1 etc.) son of Dānu who mourns his death (ṚV I.32.9) and also by calling him dāsa in II.11.2. In IX.88.4, the Ṛgvedic poet clearly states that: "You are a killer of all those that are called Ahi (*ahināmnām*)." In the previous *pāda* he speaks about the destruction of Vṛtra and in the following one that of the dasyus. Aḥṇe and Aḥi have both formed parts of Assyrian names. The catalogue of tablets in the Kouyunjik collection refers to at least twenty-four names of officials and rulers which begin with Aḥi.[1] Later Indian tradition confirms this usage. Thus both the words Vṛtra and Ahi do not warrant the interpretation 'dragon'. Vrtra may have

been guarding the dam, preventing any intruders from going near the valves.

The fight between Indra and Vṛtra and his men, who are referred to as the Vṛtras in several places,[2] is described in ṚV I.32 in details with innumerable references strewn all over the Ṛgveda. One significant feature of the fight is the frequent mention of the mountain which obstructed the waters. In I.32.2 Ahi is said to be lying on the mountain (*parvate*). I.57.6 once again refers to "a great wide mountain (*parvataṃ mahāmūrum*)" which Indra shatters to pieces by his bolt. Further in V.32.1, the great mountain (*mahāntam parvatam*) is broken open by Indra. The function of this mountain seems to have been to enclose the water, to obstruct it, because, as the mountain was shattered by Indra, the waters of the seven rivers started running irresistibly towards the sea. Thus Indra is said to have released the imprisoned waters as in I.57.6, I.103.2. ṚV II.11.2 gives some idea of the amount of water that was enclosed where it is called the great expanse (of water, *mahiḥ*) or elsewhere the term *arṇas*, flood is used to indicate the waters released by Indra. This may signify that the imprisoned or enclosed volume of water was very big and when it was released, it roared down like a natural flood (II.19.3). II.15.3 creates a more concrete picture: he opened the channels of the rivers which were blocked. In fact in II.15.8 Indra is said to have removed artificial barriers on the rivers (*riṇag rodhāṁsi kṛtrimāṇy eṣām*).

Did he really break the mountain? Metaphorically he did but more concretely he is said to have "opened the mouth of the waters which was covered, after killing Vṛtra" *apām bilam apihitam yadāsit, vṛtram jaghanvān apa tad vavāra* (I.32.11). In V.32.2, the udder or bosom of the mountain is ripped open by Indra. In II.11.2, the waters are said to have been obstructed by Ahi in ancient times and in IV.17.1 they are said to have been devoured (*jagrasānam*) by Ahi. √*gras*, to devour etc. later meant to suppress, stop. The three elements i.e. the killing of Vṛtra by Indra, the opening of the mouth of waters and the release of waters result from each other. They may indicate that the mountain, frequently referred to, might have been a dam, containing a fairly large volume of water, and equipped with sluice valves which were guarded by Vṛtra and his men and are mentioned in the episode as the *bila, ūdha or dūra* (as in ṚV VI.30.5). This dam is directly referred to in ṚV II.15.8c as *rodhāṁsi kṛtrimāṇi*, the artificial barriers, mounds, dams. In the second *pāda* of the same verse he is said to have broken the fortification of the mountain which, as discussed above, was probably a metaphorical description of the dam. There is therefore enough evidence, direct and indirect, to show that there was a dam which was guarded by Vṛtra and which was opened by Indra to let the waters flow down the river. Indra could have access to it only after killing Vṛtra. The water was released

not by breaking it, but by opening the mouths. And this Indra did not do once but as is said in ṚV IV.19.8, 'for many dawns and autumns, did Indra let loose the streams', *pūrvīruṣasaḥ śaradaśca gūrtā vṛtram jaghanvān asṛjad vi sindhūn*. The released waters were those of the *sapta-sindhus*, the seven streams referred to in II.12.12. Thus even the probable location of the dam could be tentatively fixed with the help of this last detail. It was down the stream after the confluence of the seven rivers.

The cows mentioned in I.32.2 and 11 are clearly metaphorical expressions and do not seem to have any mythic implications.

The destruction of Vṛtra was the chief feather in Indra's cap as is obvious from the prominent place it occupies in the eulogies sung to him.

2. Indra and Parvata

Macdonell has observed that "the clouds play no great part in the ṚV under their literal name (*abhra*, etc.)..."[3] If this is so, there is no great necessity to posit their existence. He has, however, noted the appearance of *parvata*, mountain in the Indra-myth. The references to the mountain in Vṛtra-episode are mostly to the wide dam which was built across the united stream of the seven rivers. In some places, *parvata* may be treated as a natural phenomenon. As for example when Kulitara is said to have lived in the mountain, it might be considered a statement of fact. "When the mountains quake, the skies screamed forth and the atmosphere was agitated etc." in ṚV X.44.8 might sound as a metaphorical description of the heroism of Indra. On the same level can be treated the description in ṚV II.12.2. Instances could be added.

But besides this, Parvata appears to be the name of a god who is invoked along with other divinities in IV.55.5 and VI.49.14. In VIII.3.19 Parvata appears to be one of the adversaries of Indra whose cows Indra has driven away.

"You, O Indra, pushed Vṛtra from the high source (?). The cattle of Arbuda, of the magician Mṛgaya, of Parvata, you drove out."

The context clearly shows that Parvata belonged to the enemy side of Indra whom Indra had deprived of their cattle. In this context Parvata seems to have been a proper name, as e.g. ṚV VIII.12 is composed by Parvataḥ Kāṇvaḥ; IX.104, 105 are also attributed to Parvata-Nāradau Kāṇvau. (Even now in Maharashtra Parvate is a surname.) The usage of the poets' names confirms that in the hymn i.e. ṚV VIII.3.19 Parvata is used as a personal name.

3. Pūrbhid

In ṚV, Indra was also given the epithets *pūrbhid*,[4] and *purandara*[5] for having destroyed the enemy-fortresses. In many cases, the fortresses seemed to have belonged to individual dāsas and asuras, and are mentioned along with them. As for example, Śuṣṇa's forts have been shattered by Indra (I.51.11), or as in IV.30.13 Indra destroys a single fort and VIII.1.28 the fort is said to be a moving one. Pipru's forts are also referred to in I.51.5 and VI.20.7. Śambara is attributed ninety-nine forts (I.130.7, II.19.6, etc.) or at times they are said to be hundred (II.14.6, etc.). The individuals to whom the fortresses belonged are described as dāsas or asuras.

Now, the terms *pūr* and *pura* are treated as synonymous and usually translated as fortress or fort. Actually, the term *pūr* means wall, rampart and *pura* is derived from *pūr*, the meaning being that which is built of walls, an enclosed space or a hedged (house) enclosure. In this sense, the term *pura* may be applied to an enclosing wall of a town, village, etc. or such enclosed villages, or towns and *pūr* may be treated in its literal sense of wall. The interpretation of *pura* is supported by ṚV VI.20.10 where the *puras* are said to have comprised of *śāradīḥ śarma* (*śarma* here meaning shelter, refuge, protection). This reading may throw light on other obscure terms too.

The materials that went into the making of the *puras* are mentioned in many places in the ṚV. In ṚV IV.27.1, VII.15.14, X.101.8 etc. *āyasīḥ pūr* is mentioned. The term *āyasīḥ* means made of metal. It seems inconceivable that the walls of an enclosure could be made of metal, especially in the days of ṚV or even before it, when metal, either copper or bronze or iron could not have been available in such abundance as to construct full walls. It is possible that metal could have been used as one of the materials in the construction of walls. But some references in the ṚV seem to undermine this interpretation of *āyasīḥ*. In several hymns, prayers are addressed to Indra or Agni in order that they bestow an *āyasīḥ pur* on the devotee. In ṚV II.20.8, the *āyasīḥ pur* is destroyed by Indra, after killing the dasyus. In X.101.8, the Viśvedevas (all gods) are prayed in order that they make the *āyasīḥ pura, adhṛṣṭa*, i.e. invincible. VII.15.14 is a hymn addressed to agni, where he is prayed for making the *āyasīḥ pūr anādhṛṣṭa*, i.e. invincible and hundred walled (*śatabhujiḥ*). If the walls were made of metal, all these prayers would have been unnecessary as by their very nature they would have been a protection. That a protection is sought through prayers suggests that the iron fortresses were vulnerable. The answer to this problem may probably be traced in the meaning of the word *ayas*. Perhaps *āyasīḥ* was not derived from *ayas*, iron or copper but might have been an independent word. As the protection is sought from agni, it may be

conjectured that probably it was not metal but some material which could be consumed by fire, and may possibly be some kind of wood. It is customary in India to have huts made of bamboo or cane, plastered with mud and replastered with cow-dung, after the mud is dried. These houses are common amongst peasants and other poorer classes. In ṚV II.20.8, the *āyasīḥ pur* is associated with the dasyus who, according to the interpretation suggested above, were the common folk. Marāṭhi word for these walls is *kuḍa*. It is also found in Pali as *kuḍḍya*. In the Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra *aiṣikā*—from *iṣīkā*—is used in the sense of 'stalks, reeds or cane'. *Iṣīkā* means a reed, rush or stem of grass, a small stick of wood or iron (used for trying whether the gold in a crucible is melted). Just as *iṣīkā* originally meaning reed etc. came to signify an iron stick, irrespective of what it was made of, *āyasī* might have originally meant reed or cane or wood. An inflammable material came to be related to *ayas*, iron because of the apparent phonetic similarity. Sometimes huts are also constructed with a type of grass which has thick tall stalks and grows on the water side. This variety of grass is called *Kai* (*Kayi*) in Pahāḍi language, spoken in the hills of Himachal Pradesh and also in Panjabi. The bare, dry stalks are known as *Kāś*. Phonetically *āyasī* and *aiṣika* seem to be related: ay of the parent language may become ai in Sanskrit and s>ṣ. The reasons may be that words borrowed from a foreign language into Sanskrit are used in their original sense (i.e. as in the mother language) in ṚV. Later they went out of use because of foreign origin. Their meaning was gradually forgotten or new words were derived from these borrowed words according to certain rules which are incidentally observable, and used in the original sense. When new words came into vogue, as a result of practical need, these borrowed words, because of phonetic similarity, were tagged on to them. This helped in a way to forget the original meaning of the borrowed words. (This may explain the need for the compilation of works like Nighaṇṭus and Niruktas.) In this case the new word coined or already existing in Indo-Aryan was *ayas*, bronze, iron. When *āyasī* was borrowed its meaning was still different. However, with the passage of time, the origin along with the meaning was forgotten. It was read in the light of the word *ayas* from which it can be derived. If the walls or enclosures were really made of metal, they would not have been burnt by agni or shattered by Indra.

This interpretation fits in with the other kinds of materials mentioned in ṚV. In IV.30.20, Indra is said to have shattered hundred *aśmamayīnām purām*, i.e. stone (houses) fortresses. Elsewhere[6] are referred to the *āmāsu pūrṣu*, in the unbaked (raw) walls or fortresses, which Macdonell thinks probably refers to houses of sun-dried bricks which is very plausible.[7] Geldner also accepts this interpretation.[8] The fortress of raw bricks is associated with Apām Napāt. Yet another type of fortress is mentioned in ṚV I.131.4; 174.2, VI.20.10 and that *puro*

yadindra śāradiravātiraḥ, śāradi fortress which Indra you subjugated; *sapta yat puraḥ śarma śāradīrdart*, (you) who have shattered the seven fortresses of *śarma śāradī*. *Śarma* means a shelter, protection, refuge, the derivation of the word being uncertain. *Śāradī* is usually derived from *śarad*, autumn and translated as 'autumnal'. Autumnal refuge, though it sounds reasonable when one remembers of country houses of modern days, makes little sense in the Ṛgvedic context.

The word *śarad* is said to be "probably derived from √*śrā*", to cook, boil, seethe, *mature*, *ripen* and in VS is used to mean, to make hot, heat; *bake* (earthenware). *Śāradi* may be semantically related to √*śrā*, to bake, to mature. It appears that *śārada* was originally a borrowed word which was later appended on to the root *śrā*, to cook, bake etc. While borrowing these words the Aryans appended them on to suitable words which, later in classical Sanskrit, assumed altogether different significance, whereas in ṚV these words were used in the original sense which was then current. Thus in the literal sense *śārada* may mean that which is ripened, cooked, matured in the same sense as *pakva* as opposed to *āma*. *Śāradi* derived from *śārada* may have the connotation of 'made out of matured, ripened, baked'. When applied to shelters it might signify a shelter built out of baked bricks as opposed to *āmā pūḥ*, the unbaked or raw (bricked) walls. This interpretation is supported by the archaeological findings.

In one place, the fortress of Śuṣṇa is said to be *cariṣṇu*, moving. In JB I.125-127, a *naunagara* is mentioned and Śuṣṇa is called a dāsa, a mariner or fisherman, as has been shown above. This moving fortress was probably a large ship and because of its large size as a ship it was probably styled as a moving fortress. A fortress with hundred curved walls (*śatabhuji*) is also mentioned in ṚV.[9]

Thus the walls of the houses of the enemies of the devas, the asuras, dāsas, dasyus etc. were probably made of stone, sunburnt bricks, baked bricks or simply of the bamboos or reeds. These houses of the enemies were destroyed by Indra through the liberal use of fire and by causing untimely floods by releasing the waters of the seven rivers. That is how Indra became the *Purandara*, the breaker of fortresses.

4. Māyā, magic, illusion

Throughout ṚV, the term *māyā*, magic, illusion is used in connection with the enemies of the devas.[10] *Māyin* or *māyāvin* is a common epithet of the asuras and the dāsas. As has been already seen in X.177.1, it is used even in connection with Asura, the god, *patańgam aktam asurasya māyayā*. It is used in connection with Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa and others as well.

VS XXX.7 in the list of the *balis* of *puruṣamedha* it is prescribed: *māyāyai karmāram*, to *māyā*, *karmāra* i.e. an artisan, a blacksmith may be offered as a sacrifice. Mahidhara in his commentary on VS XXX.5 makes it clear that the word ending with the dative termination indicates the divinity and one in accusative, men (*puruṣāḥ*). ŚB XIII.4.3.11 refers to *māyāveda*, which in the Śāṅkhyāyana and Aśvalāyana Śrautasūtras is mentioned as equivalent of *asuravidyā*, the science of the asuras.

The word *māyā* is derived from √*mā*, to measure, mete out, correspond in measure, to prepare, arrange, fashion, form, build, make, exhibit. Thus *māyā* should mean building, fashioning, measured one, arranged etc. When used as qualifying a noun it may indicate the capacity to fashion, build, form etc. This interpretation is supported by citation from VS where an artisan is supposed to be a suitable offering to the goddess Māyā, i.e. the deity or principle presiding over the activity of fashioning or building. This is indicated by the choice of artisan to be offered to her. It seems probable that the principle underlying the choice of the *bali* is governed by 'similarity' between abstraction and its concrete active embodiment. Av. māyu, skilful is confirmative.[9a]

Thus *māyā*, the creative capacity, is what is referred to in the case of Asura in ṚV X.177.1. Asura was viewed as the source or matrix of all creation. The asuras and the dāsas were able to construct, to fashion out things which struck the devas as something irrepressible, almost beyond human ability. To them the fortresses, the construction of the dam guarded by Vṛtra, and a host of other things were manifestations of this power. Thus the *māyāveda* may really be the science of construction and not illusion, as is generally supposed.

5. The enemies of Indra

Several asuras and dāsas who were destroyed by Indra are mentioned in ṚV and the Brāhmaṇas. In each case, some fanciful mythic traits are associated with the enemies leading to the loss of their human identity. They represent the forces of evil with superhuman powers and are ultimately subdued by the divine forces. The following discussion may appear to centre around the so-called mythic elements. They are discussed to demonstrate that these were originally non-existent and were later superimpositions.

Several names of the enemies are mentioned in the hymns eulogising the brave deeds of Indra. In some cases nothing is known beyond names. For example, Karañja and Parṇaya were killed by Indra and their destruction was important enough to be mentioned (ṚV I.53.8, X.48.8). Vaṅgṛda is also mentioned once and the only detail that is known is that his hundred *puras* were destroyed by Indra (ṚV I.53.8)

Though Ahiśuva is mentioned thrice (VIII.32.2, 26; X.144.3), little is known beyond that he looked down upon Indra and was killed by him along with Sṛbinda, Anarśani (who appears only here), Pipru, Vṛtra, Aurṇavābha and Arbuda. Amongst the names that occur on the cuneiform tablets in the Kouyunjik collection, (Ass.) Aḥishu is listed as a male proper name.[12] Aurṇavābha is mentioned twice. He was a dānava and was killed by Indra. Ilībiśa was struck hard by Indra.[13] Asura Bṛhacchravā was torn out. The men of asura Vṛkadvaras were destroyed by Indra (ṚV II.20.4).

But the challenge posed by these asuras and dāsas was comparatively a minor one. From the frequent references to Śambara, Śuṣṇa, Pipru, Namucī, Araru and others, can easily be guessed the effort needed to destroy them.

Śuṣṇa is referred to in practically all the hymns where Indra's heroic deeds are extolled. Indra had summoned his entire strength to kill Śuṣṇa whose death was implored for in the hymns (ṚV X.22.7). The dasyu is said to have harassed the Aryans; he performed no pious deeds, had no holy ideas and followed other's vows. Indra is asked to outwit the weapons of this dāsa. He is called *amānuṣa*, unmanly, inhuman, probably bespeaking his cruelty.

Several sub-human traits are attributed to Śuṣṇa such as his having horns (*śṛṅgiṇaḥ*),[14] his snorting and hissing,[15] his having eggs and a brood.[16]

In I.33.12 he is mentioned along with Ilībiśa whose fortresses Indra destroyed. The verse may be translated as follows: "Indra overthrew the fortresses of Ilībiśa; he cut down the horned Śuṣṇa. With perfect fury, with entire strength, you have killed with the thunderbolt the warlike enemy." Sāyaṇa glosses it as "*śṛṅgiṇaṃ gomahiṣādiśṛṅgasamānair āyudhairupetam*", horned one (means) one bestowed with weapons similar to the horns of cow, buffalo etc. Geldner accepts his interpretation. Although the common connotation of *śṛṅga* is horn, in general it denotes the summit of a building, pinnacle, turret etc. and in MBh VI.2413, it is used in the sense of "a particular military array in the form of a horn or crescent" or as in Raghuvaṁśa, the horn is used "as a symbol of self-reliance, strength or haughtiness". If it is supposed that the Raghuvaṁśa speaks of a custom which may be of a later date, the contemporary custom of similar nature is found depicted on some of the seals of Assyrian and Sumerian origin.[17] The horned head-dress, especially on gods and priests, is of frequent occurrence. Besides this *śārṅga* is the name of Viṣṇu's bow, the proto-type of which might have been a bow used by Śuṣṇa. *Śṛṅga* might have been derived from a word probably *śārṅga* or rather **śāraṅga*, the original meaning of which is re-

tained. The sanskritized form *śṛṅga* might in that case be a back-formation. With this may be compared a name of Viṣṇu, Śāraṅgadhara. I.54.5 refers to the hissing, snorting of Śuṣṇa. The term used to describe it is *śvasana*. "When you struck down the head of the already succumbing Śuṣṇa, with whose *śvasana* the forests resounded, with striving and zealous mind—even if you want to do this today who will prohibit thee?" *Śvasana* means hissing, blowing and also breathing, panting. If the term is taken in the latter sense, it may indicate that probably Śuṣṇa was breathing his last rather noisily, which is expressed in exaggerated manner by the resounding of forests.

The references to the eggs and the brood appear in ṚV VIII.40.10, 11; X.22.11.

"Make him sharp by praise-songs; the fearful praise-worthy warrior, who quickly with force breaks open the *aṇḍāni* of Śuṣṇa, may he vanquish the waters along with the sun." "Make him sharp; the well-sacrificing, truthful, accurate, warrior, who glorifies himself immediately. He will break open the *aṇḍāni* of Śuṣṇa..." Though Geldner has translated *aṇḍāni* as eggs, in the footnote he adds: "The eggs are the progeny or brood of Śuṣṇa",[18] who are referred to in X.22.11 as *śuṣṇasya jātam*, those born of Śuṣṇa. The text as it stands does not suggest anything sub-human. The use of *aṇḍāni* may be suggestive of contempt, however, it is applicable to all human progeny. Thus once again, the mythology is found non-existing.

Uraṇu is mentioned in ṚV II.14.4 who is said to have stretched forth his 99 arms when Indra killed him. The *ṛcā* contains an obscure word *cakhvāṁsam*, which seems to conceal the secret. It appears that the term *bāhu* > *bāhuka* later had the connotation of servile, attendant. Nala in his incognito period had assumed this name and served as an attendant. Although evidence at present is too scanty to offer any definite interpretation, this might be one of the possibilities.

Svarbhānu is yet another asura with whom certain mythopoeic constructions are associated. The episode is narrated in ṚV V.40.5-9:

5. When, O Sūrya, the Asuric Svarbhānu had pierced you with darkness, then the creatures appeared like a person who has lost his way, who is not familiar with the land.
6. Then, when you, O Indra, destroyed the magics (*māyā*) of Svarbhānu which went on under the heaven, then Atri found, with the fourth magical mantra, the sun covered by the unlawful darkness.
7. (Sūrya says): He should not swallow me who are thine, O Atri, falsely by jealousy and fear. You are Mitra (friend) whose favour is genuine. You and king Varuṇa both of you take me into protection on this occasion hereby.

8. Atri the high priest who sets in motion the pressing stones and honours the gods by mere salutation and seeks to win, placed the eye of the sun in the heaven, and set aside the magics (*māyā*) of Svarbhānu.
9. The sun who had been hit by darkness by the Asuric Svarbhānu was found again by the Atris because the others were not in a position for that act.

TS 2.1.2.2, TMB 6.6.8, ŚB V.3.2.2 refer to the legend of Svarbhānu but do not supply any additional information. MBh mentions Svarbhānu in the list of powerful Asura kings of the past. Later tradition identifies Svarbhānu with Rāhu who swallows the sun, the conventional description of the solar eclipse. But the Bṛhaddevatā supplies an important clue in V.12ab: *svarbhānudṛṣṭam sūryasya apahatya tamo 'trayaḥ|* and is translated by Macdonell: "The Atris having dispelled the eclipse (lit. darkness) of the sun seen by Svarbhānu praised agni..."[19] A variant reading of *svarbhānudṛṣṭam* is given as *svarbhānudiṣṭam*, which is translated as 'decreed'. This decree of Svarbhānu may have dual sense: In the first sense, it may be that as a special event, it was customary for a king to issue a decree, intimating the people of the special event, in this particular case, the eclipse. To a primitive man unacquainted with the intricacies of astronomy it might appear to have been decreed by the king. That is the announcement came prior to the event and was followed by it giving the impression that it happened by the king's command. If ṚV and Bṛhaddevatā are to be correlated, this may be the possible interpretation. Alternatively, it may be interpreted that by his decree i.e. by his commands he has brought about the astronomical event in demonstration of his superhuman powers. This seems to have been the accepted interpretation so far. But probably ṚV also meant it in the first sense i.e. Svarbhānu knew and took advantage of the astronomical event. The term *avidhyan* appearing in v. 5 is derived from √ *vyadh*, to pierce, hit, strike, wound, transfix and in astronomy, it is used in the sense of "to fix the position of a heavenly body". Thus it is not unlikely that Svarbhānu having known of the natural event beforehand, took advantage of the occasion, and attacked the unprepared devas. This is confirmed by the MBh version of the episode.[20] The Atris who are said to have restored the sun's eye may have been the priests, well-versed in astronomical calculations. They intimated Indra about the exact time of the end of the eclipse. The magics of Svarbhānu appearing in v. 6 refers to the power of Svarbhānu and in v. 8 also it means the power which could darken the sun. The reference to the "fourth magical mantra" refers to the astronomical calculations of the Atri, the leader of the Atris. Mitra in v. 7 refers to Mitra, the co-ruler of Varuṇa and not friend, as suggested by Geldner.

In III.39.5 once again Indra is said to have found, along with the Daśagvas, the sun enveloped in darkness. This is possibly a reference

to yet another eclipse. As complete eclipses do not occur with such frequency it may be treated as an identical event. The Daśagvas were the first priests to offer sacrifice, and the Atri, a name of doubtful origin, may have been agni-priests. At any rate, knowledge of astronomy coupled with the non-Sanskritic nature of their names, points to a non-Aryan origin of the priest, possibly Assyro-Babylonian amongst whom astronomy was a developed branch of knowledge.[20a]

Probably the most interesting episode is that of Araru's destruction of which at least three versions are available in Vedic literature. The narrative is significant for two reasons. It illustrates the general trend of *devāsura* conflict in a particularised manner. Secondly, it shows close connection between the Brahmanic rites as symbolic enactment of certain events.

In Ṛgveda, Araru is mentioned only twice. First in I.129.3 he is given one line of a three-lined verse, 2. whereas in X.99.10 he appears only in the fourth *pāda*. In the first case, Sāyaṇa has interpreted Araru as a cloud and a whole line is commented upon to fit in this context. Geldner has translated the name Araru but has followed Sāyaṇa's interpretation. His translation is as follows: "O brave one, protect every inimical mortal, (while) you pass over the mortal..."

dasmo hi ṣmā vṛṣaṇam pinvasi tvacaṃ kaṃ cidyāvīrararum śūra martyam parivṛṇakṣi martyam|

The crucial words in this line are '*vṛṣaṇam tvacam*', '*yāvīḥ*', and '*parivṛṇakṣi*'. The first, *vṛṣaṇaṃ tvacaṃ*, is a straightforward expression and refers to Araru and Indra's treatment of him.

Araru is the bull-like man, the *naravṛṣabha* which in later days is the title of a strong, virile, he-man. This Araru was fattened by Indra i.e. Indra allowed him to feed himself well. '*Yāvīḥ*' may be derived from √*yu*, to ward off. '*Parivṛṇakṣi*' is derived from *pari*+√*vṛj*, to keep off, remove, i.e. similar to √*yu*. Thus now the translation of the above line may be: "O you accomplisher of wonderful deeds, you fatten the skin of the bull (like man). O brave one some mortal Araru you have warded off; you have indeed removed the mortal."

It may be of interest to note the adjective *martya*, mortal, applied to Araru.

The second reference to Araru in ṚV X.99.10 is short but meaningful. The verse is in praise of Indra. Only the relevant fourth *pāda* is examined here: *amimītāraruṃ yaścatuṣpāt*. The epithet, *catuṣpāt* is glossed upon by Sāyaṇa as *pādacatuṣṭayopetaḥ*, one endowed with

four feet. Geldner has followed Sāyaṇa's gloss. The *padapāṭha* writes it as *catuḥ pāt* i.e. treats it as two separate words. Thus *pāt* when treated as a separate word is the present participle of √*pā*, to watch, keep, preserve, defend against, to protect etc. Thus the verse may now be translated as: "He who measured Araru, preserving [him] four times."

The Brahmanic versions support this interpretation. VS I.26, ŚB I.2.4.15-21 and TaiBr. III.2.9.4 provide most of the information. VS I.26 gives the *mantras*, the accompanying actions being explained in the ŚB passage.[21] TaiBr. III.2.9.4-6 runs as follows: There was an asura called Araru. He lay concealed (?)[22] on the earth. So the devas said: Araru has been killed by the earth and therefore killed him by earth. Araru was an enemy... They thought: If unrestrained, he will fly to *Div*. Therefore, in order that he should not run away to *Div* they surrounded the *Div*. So they drove away the second (time). (He was) beaten away from *Antarikṣa*. That was the third driving away. They beat him (saying) this is the *Div*. They drive away fourth (time) silently. They drive him from the *aparimita*, the infinite. He was the chief of the asuras.

ŚB I.2.4.8-21 version is the most detailed account and probably a faithful representation of the event. Paragraphs 8-13 narrate how agni assisted the devas to put down the asuras and will be dealt with in detail at a later stage. The same rite continues. The number four there stands for the three worlds and the fourth beyond these.

"14. And whoever has evil designs upon the sacrificer and hates him, him he puts down by means of these (three) worlds and what fourth world there is beyond these. And in putting him down with these three worlds and what fourth world there is beyond these, he flings everything away from this (earth), for on it all these worlds rest...
15. Thereupon, after putting the grass-bush between he flings (the wooden sword at it). 'Lest I should injure the earth with this sharp thunderbolt!' Thus (he thinks) for that reason he flings after putting the grass bush between.
16. He flings it, with the text: 'O earth, that affordest the place for making offerings to the gods! May I not injure the root of thy plant!' He thereby makes her as if it were with roots remaining in her. Whilst he takes up (the earth dug by the sword), he thus addresses her: 'May I not injure the roots of thy plants!'—and in further saying, 'Go to the fold, the abode of the cows!' When he is about to throw it away (on the heap of rubbish), he causes it not to forsake him: for that which is within the fold does not forsake him: for that reason he says, 'Go to the fold, the abode of the cows!'—He further says (whilst looking at the hole in the ground): 'May the sky rain on thee!' Wherever in digging into her, they wound and injure her—water being a means of expiation—that

he thereby expiates by the water which is (a means of) expiation; that he thereby makes good by means of the water: That is the reason he says: 'May the sky rain on thee!'—'Tie him down, O divine Savitṛ, to the furthest end of the earth!' he says (whilst throwing on the heap of rubbish the soil dug up); he thus says to the divine Savitṛ: 'Tie him down to blind darkness!' When he says 'to the furthest end of the earth'—'with a hundred fetters!' by this he means to say, 'so that he cannot free himself.'—'Him who hates us and whom we hate do not release from there!' Whether or not he wishes to exercise, let him say: 'so and so...do not release from there!'

17. He then throws (the wooden sword) a second time (Vāj.S. I.26): 'May I drive Araru away from the earth, the place of offerings!' Araru, namely, was an Asura and Rakṣas. Him the gods drove away from this (earth) and in the same way he (the *Adhvaryu*) thereby drives him away from this (earth). He adds (whilst repeating the several corresponding acts): 'Go to the fold...ditto...release him from there!'

18. The *Agnidhra* presses it down (on the heap of rubbish), with the text (Vāj.S. I.26): 'O Araru! thou shalt not fly up to heaven!' For when the gods drove away Araru, the Asura-Rakṣas he wished to fly up to heaven. Agni pressed him down, saying 'O Araru, thou shalt not fly up to heaven!' and he did not fly up to heaven. In the same way the Adhvaryu thereby cuts him off from this world, and the Agnidhra from the side of heaven. That is the reason why he does this.

19. He then throws (the wooden sword) a third time, with the text... He adds: 'Go to the fold...ditto...release him from there.'

20. Three times he throws it with the sacrificial formula; for three are these worlds and with these worlds, he thereby puts him (the evil spirit) down.

21. Silently he throws a fourth time. What fourth world there may or may not be beyond these (three), by that one he thereby drives away the spiteful enemy..."[23]

The blade of grass is Araru. The *Agnidhra*, it is explained in the text, is virtually agni himself (§ 13). *Adhvaryu* enacts the actions performed by the devas themselves i.e. he shuts the asuras in from his side. In that battle which is the theme of § 8-10 the devas set fire from the northern side so that the asuras should not be able to escape.

Probably Araru was kept in captivity in a cowshed with Savitā (?) as the guard. He was not killed immediately, although that was what the devas thought of doing. This vacillation is explained by the change of mind of *Adhvaryu*: he first thinks of throwing away the blade of grass on the heap of rubbish, but instead decides to preserve it in the cowshed because whatever is within the shed does not forsake him. So he preserved it. But obviously Araru tried to escape to *Div*, but did not succeed as the fire had blocked his way. Therefore, the text says,

Agnidhra the virtual agni, presses him down. The attempt to flee roused the wrath of the devas who killed him. He dies with the fourth stroke. The four strokes represent the number of worlds which may be indicatory of the three directions. Thus *catuṣpāt* of the ṚV version refers to four as being the number of times he has been saved by the devas after having been taken into captivity. In the ŚB version the fourth stroke kills him but by relating it to the fourth world he is said to have been driven there.

The hesitation of the devas is reflected in the Ṛgvedic verse with the fattening of the bull's skin, which suggests that the hesitation gave him time to strengthen himself.

Practically all the words of the Ṛgvedic version thus become clear with the help of the ŚB narrative and rite.

Namucī was one of the Asuras destroyed by Indra, after a pact of friendship. The circumstances in which this happened are not clear. Namucī has the dubious distinction of being famous not in the Vedic tradition alone. He found his way into Buddhism too. There he was bestowed the honour of an encounter with the Buddha himself.[24]

The Namucī-incident has been exhaustively treated by M. Bloomfield in JAOS XV, pp. 143-163. Only a summary is given here. Bloomfield concerned himself more with the pact than with other elements of the Namucī episode.

Indra and Namucī became friends for some reasons. They made a pact that they would not kill each other by day or by night, by anything wet or dry. Namucī gave a drink called *surā* to Indra which, according to Bloomfield, was not his "tipple". It made Indra sick and deprived him of his joy of life, his food etc. Sarasvati and Aśvins cured him. Then wishing to avenge himself on Namucī within the framework of the pact, he killed him before dawn which is neither day nor night and by foam which is neither dry nor wet. The foam has been identified by Bloomfield as lead which is also known as river foam.

Bloomfield has not referred to an element of the episode which is narrated in ṚV V.30.7-10. The translation is as follows:

7. O liberal one, you burst open immediately on your birth the despisers completely allowing munificence its course, when you delighted at the gaining of the cows. (That was) at that time when you broke the head of Dāsa Namucī by rolling, seeking a free road for Manu.
8. "You have made me indeed as your ally"—but you, O Indra, have (brought into rolling) the head of the Dāsa Namucī which rolled

like a hissing stone. Heaven and earth rolled just like wheels for the Maruts.
9. The Dāsa had indeed made women his weapons—"what would his weak army do to me?" (Thus spoke Indra), because he had discovered their two feminine breasts. Thereupon Indra went forward to fight the Dasyu.
10. The cows bellowed together from all sides as they were here and there separated from their calves. Indra with his helpmates brought them together as the excellently pressed soma drafts had intoxicated him.

The hymn refers only to the friendship between Indra and Namucī and not to the terms of the pact. Despite this, Indra rolled off Namucī's head. A detail is furnished about the battle between the two—that Namucī had the most unusual kind of weapons viz. women, and Indra chaffs at the idea of fighting with this weak army, the army of women.

What is suggested by the *striyo hi dāsa āyudhāni cakre* is that Indra was sought to be influenced through these women. As if Indra has replied to this in ṚV X.27.10, by saying 'whoever wishes to fight the bull with women, his property I shall distribute without fight'. Curiously enough, this element of the story is not preserved in the Brahmanic tradition whereas Buddhism has revived it in the context of the last temptation of the Buddha by Namucī—Māra aided by his daughters or his *senā*, army comprising of Kāma, Arati, Khuppipāsā, Taṇhā and so on.[25] The Buddhist presentation is mythopoeic, whereas the Vedic episode is based on a historical event.

A reference to the Dāśarājña, the Battle of ten kings, may not be out of place here. The oldest account of Dāśarājña appears in ṚV VII.18, although in this account it is not called Dāśarājña as in VII.33 and VII.83. This battle was fought between Sudās and the ten other kings, who from their names are generally recognised to be non-Aryans. Sudās, a grandson of Divodās, from his name, is apparently a dās or dāś. Indra has helped Divodās in his battle against Śambara and also assisted Sudās in his fight against the ten kings. Thus the Dāśarājña was really the battle between two non-Aryan parties in which Indra was an ally of Sudās. Therefore, as far as the theme of the fights between Aryans and others is concerned, this has only peripheral interest, since Indra was only an ally and was not fighting his own battle. Many such battles were fought by Indra as part of the strategy of exploiting the local feuds to establish himself as the friend of local chiefs. In such battles may be cited his assistance given to Ṛjiśvan against Pipru, Namī Sāpya against Namucī, etc. Thus the assistance to Sudās was not extraordinary. For this reason, though Dāśarājña is recognised as a historical event, it is fought by human beings, which incidentally makes Indra human too, it is not treated here in greater details. It is of peripheral interest to the present theme and most probably it is of later date than the events discussed here.

All these episodes give some idea of the conflict and the opposition that was met with. In most cases, the mythopoeic element is a later projection on the earlier description of the events as they took place. Some of the details were twisted so as to fit in with the later mythopoeic and ritual context.

6. The devāsura conflict in the Brāhmaṇas

The Ṛgveda preserves the knowledge of the battles between Indra and the individual asuras. The emphasis is on the conflicts with and ultimate destruction of the individual asuras by Indra. This was probably determined by the nature of the compositions which are addressed mainly to individuals. Even in the course of these hymns one can get a fair idea of the struggle which may have taken place not only on individual level, but also collectively as is reflected in the tributes paid to Indra for the defeat and slaughter of the 30,000 dāsas, 1,00,000 warriors of the dāsa Varcin, 50,000 dark warriors of Pipru, though the numbers appear to be exaggerated.[26]

The Brāhmaṇas depict the conflict as between two groups, i.e. the devas and the asuras. The narratives are usually cited to explain certain *mantras* and to support certain rites. In the latter case, certain actions are said to be performed because original agents, the devas and the asuras, acted in a given manner and therefore, a person wishing to bring about the same result through a sacrifice may act likewise i.e. may perform the same action symbolically by using substitutes. This has already been noted in the Araru-episode. The original episode of the defeat of Araru is enacted by the priests, *āgnidhra* and *adhvaryu* in order to kill a person who hates them and whom they hate. As pointed out in the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, the *āgnidhra* is virtually *agni*, they i.e. the devas are represented by the *adhvaryu*, the blade of grass is Araru and the wooden sword is substituted for the original metal-sword. This is yet another difference in the depictions in ṚV and the Brāhmaṇas. The mythopoeic representation did not exist in ṚV; it came at the time of the Brāhmaṇas when the Aryans wanted to create a religion out of the events described in ṚV. The events of the bygone age came to be acted only symbolically. The original significance of Ṛgveda was forgotten and what remained was the dead ritual which was performed year after year without its significance being understood.

As the purpose of the two compositions was different, a corresponding change in the language also came in. In Ṛgveda it is realistic but pithy whereas the Brāhmaṇas express the same fact first in lengthy narratives clothed in ritualistic language and then in the ritual i.e. the symbolic acting of the event itself. Besides this, the Brāhmaṇas put everything into a set formula. The narratives referring to *devāsura* conflict, as for

example, ŚB I.2.4.8, III.5.4.2 etc. open with *devāśca vā asurāśca ubhaye prājāpattyāḥ paspṛdhire*. The devas and the asuras, both descendants of Prajāpati were contesting. AiBr. puts it differently: *devāsurā vā eṣu lokeṣu samayatanta*, the devas and the asuras contended in this world.[27] In Taittirīya Saṁhitā and Brāhmaṇa, the episodes open with the phrases: *devāsurāḥ saṁyattā āsan*, the devas and asuras were engaged in contest. The duration of the conflict: There are not many indications in Ṛgveda about the duration of the conflict of the devas and the asuras. It is known that it took about forty years for Indra to kill Śambara who was hiding in the mountains, or that Indra let the waters run down the streams for many years. In Mahābhārata, the later generations of kings were still harassed by the asuras and were praised for their final defeat. Thus it may be inferred that the *devāsura* conflict did not end with the Ṛgvedic times. However, the events described in ṚV were even at that time a thing of the past as is said in referring to the brave deeds of Agni which he performed in ancient days (ṚV VII.6.2). JB records a tradition in I.107 and 125: *devāsurāḥ saṁyattā jyoṅ na vyajayanta*, the devas and the asuras, contesting for a long time, did not score a victory. When the victory came it was not complete but gradual, and also not before a long winding struggle.

The antecedents of the devas and the asuras: The tradition recorded in ŚB,[23] JB (II.150 etc.) and other Brāhmaṇas is unanimous about the devas and the asuras being the descendants of Prajāpati (*prājāpatyāḥ*). At times they are also called *bhrātṛvyās*, (inimical) cousins. The validity of the tradition cannot be tested. However, it may simply mean that they were known to each other in some remote past, or that they had lived side by side and parted, as the similarity in the concept of the gods of the two viz. *dyauṣ pitara* and *dyaur asura* may suggest.

Ṛgveda is the story of a continuous victory, whereas the Brāhmaṇas depict the struggle in all its shades. The ultimate victory of the gods was preceded by complete rout, followed by a gradual recovery leading to the final victory through immoral means. It is not unlikely that the devas did use such means as mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas. After all these are the compositions of the winners and if the tradition had not any basis in reality, it would not have been mentioned.

The demoralisation of Indra after the defeat is described in the context of *Vīryakāmeṣṭi* rite: *devāsurāḥ saṁyattā āsan tān devān asurā ajayan te devāḥ parajigyānā āsurāṇām vaiśamupāyan tebhya indriyam vīryamapakramat tadindro' cayat.../* The devas and the asuras were contending. Then the asuras were victorious over those devas. The devas who were vanquished became the dependents of asuras and their bodily vigour went away from them. Indra noticed its going away, how

it disappeared etc. but could not stop it. He behaved (acted) in such a manner as to increase or flourish it. He approached Prajāpati and offered a sacrifice called *Sarvapṛṣṭhi*, provided with all the *pṛṣṭhas*. By it the bodily vigour was restored.[29]

AiBr. V.1 narrates how the devas were prevented from entering the *svargaloka* by the asuras and rakṣas.

AiBr. II.16 describes how the devas were afraid of the asuras who robbed them of their early morning sacrifice, for they (the asuras) were so very strong and powerful (*ojiyāṁsa baliyāṁsa evaṃ*). But Indra said to them "Do not be afraid! I shall strike them with the three-fold power of my morning thunderbolt."... With this thunderbolt he struck and destroyed them. Thence the devas became masters of the asuras (*tato vai devā abhavan parāsurāḥ*).[30]

TMB 22.17.2 says: *devā asuraiḥ hanyamānāste prajāpatimupādhāvan*, the devas who were being killed by the asuras approached Prajāpati (and this appears to be a very frequent occurrence in TS too!). The anxiety of the devas is described in the following manner in TS[31]: *asurā vai niryanto devānām prāṇesu valagān nyakhanan*, having gone out, the asuras buried some charms into the life-breath of the gods which were counteracted by the gods by digging them out by *bāhumātra*. It appears that the terms *bāhumātra* and √*khai*, *khāyanta* have dual meaning which adds to the significance of the story. The term *bāhumātra* means arm-bow or a fathom (a measure); *khāyanta*, to fix, to strike or to dig. Thus ritually they counteracted the charms by digging a fathom and in reality, they struck the asuras with the arm-bow.

ŚB narrates the story in realistic terms: 1. The gods and the Asuras both of them sprung from Prajāpati were contending for superiority. Then the gods were worsted, and the Asuras thought: 'To us alone assuredly belongs this world!' 2. They thereupon said: 'Well then, let us divide this world between us and having divided it, let us subsist thereon!' They accordingly set about dividing it with ox-hides from west to east. 3. The gods then heard of this, and said: 'The Asuras are actually dividing this earth: come let us go to where the Asuras are dividing it. For what would become of us if we were to get no share in it?' Placing Viṣṇu, (in the shape of) this very sacrifice, at their head, they went (to the Asuras). 4. They then said: 'Let us share in this earth along with yourselves! Let a part of it be ours!' The Asuras replied rather grudgingly: 'As much as this Viṣṇu lies upon, and no more, we give you.' 5. Now Viṣṇu was a dwarf...[32]

Probably this was the beginning of the trouble. This was how the devas came and agreed to settle down on a plot of land assigned to them

under the supremacy of the asuras. From this place the devas spread around and drove away the asuras. This is what is indicated in TS 6.6.4.4, *upāśayenaivapānudanta*, (the asuras) were driven away (by the devas) while lying down.

Though the tradition of TMB records that the asuras surrounded the gods on all sides,[33] the other versions are also found. For example, TS 6.6.4.4 says *asurā vai devān dakṣiṇata upānayan*, the asuras drove towards the gods from the south. This is confirmed by a cryptic reference in GB I.2.19 where the south is called the terrible direction, probably signifying fear of constant attack from that side.

AiBr. I.14 and VIII.10 commemorates the first ever victory of the gods over the asuras. "The Devas and the Asuras were fighting in these worlds. They fought in the eastern direction; there the Asuras defeated the Devas. They then fought in the southern direction, the Asuras defeated the Devas again. They then fought in the western direction, the Asuras defeated the Devas again. They fought in the northern direction, the Asuras defeated the Devas again. They then fought in the north-eastern direction, there the devas did not sustain defeat. This direction is *aparājitā* i.e. unconquered..."[34]

With this victory the devas gradually gather strength, which is reflected in their being equal with the asuras. This is stated in the ritualistic language as: *devā vai yadeva kurvaṁstadasurā akurvaṁste samāvadvīrya evā'sanna vyāvartanta*, whatever sacrifices the devas offered, the asuras did the same. Thus they existed with equal strength.[35] ŚB also tells us the same story more concretely: *devāśca vā asurāśca ubhaye prājāpattyāḥ paspṛdhire te daṇḍair dhanubhirnna vyajayanta te ha avijayamānā ūcur hanta...* 'The gods and the asuras both of them sprung from Prajāpati, were once contending for superiority. With staves and bows neither party were able to overcome the other. Neither of them gained the victory, they said well, then...'[36]

From this point starts a downward trend in the fortune of the asuras which is echoed in ŚB IX.5.1.12-27, until they appear to have "leapt down from high station" (*tato asurā apapupruvire*). The passage opens: "The gods and the Asuras both of them sprung from Prajāpati, entered upon their father Prajāpati's inheritance, to wit, speech—truth and untruth, both truth and untruth: they, both of them, spake the truth and they both spake untruth and indeed speaking alike, they were alike."[37] The passage goes on to show how having had the same start, the devas became gods and the asuras, the demons!

As long as it was a straightforward fight the asuras could not be defeated by the devas. They arose again and again after the defeat and

the devas were at a loss. They decide to make use of various devices: First of them was the pairing of words in which the asuras get confused and are defeated.[38] It is not necessary to take this seriously. Briefly it may indicate that in battles the devas found the asuras invincible enemies and decided to defeat them through some foul means, which is referred to in AiBr. VI.36: *Bhutecchadbhirvai devā asurānupāsacantoteva yuddhenoteva māyayā* 'by means of the dazzling power, the devas assailed the asuras with battle or with craft'. The gods, having obscured the might of the asuras through dazzling power in battle or in cunning, overcame them... TaiBr. I.8.3.2 as if announces the judgement over what the devas did: *anṛtenasurānabhyabhavan*, by falsehood were the asuras defeated.

7. Viṣṇu of wide steps

The falsehood and cunning used by the devas in order to defeat the asuras is concealed in the narrative of the three traverses of the *pṛthivī* by Viṣṇu. Later these are transformed into the story of three paces of Viṣṇu: the earth, atmosphere and heaven.

Throughout ṚV Viṣṇu has been described as the companion of Indra. Many hymns are addressed to them jointly. Viṣṇu accompanied Indra during his fight with Vṛtra. In fact, he and the Maruts were the only ones who kept him company when all other gods had run away (ṚV IV.18.11). In his company Indra slew Vṛtra.[39] Together they destroyed dāsa Śambara and his ninety-nine fortresses and conquered the hosts of Varcin.[40]

But the most important of Viṣṇu's heroic deeds in the battles with the asuras, dāsas, etc. seems to be his travelling around the *pṛthivī* thrice which is referred to in several places. For example, in ṚV VI.49.13, it is said: "After Viṣṇu had for the distressed person (*manave bādhitāya*) measured the earthly spaces three times..." Or as in VII.100.4, "this Viṣṇu has trampled (traversed) this earth for the possession of land of Manu in order to be pleasing to him. His dispossessed people became stationary. He who gives good birth, created wide residence." In ṚV I.154, in a hymn addressed to Viṣṇu both his wide traversing and metaphorical steps are referred to:

1. I wish to proclaim now the heroic deeds of Viṣṇu who has measured through the earthly spaces, who supported the higher residence, after he had traversed thrice, the wide-traverser.
2. Thus Viṣṇu is praised on account of his heroic deeds, who lives in the mountains, moving about just as a fearful wild animal, in whose three wide traverses all creatures find their residence.
3. To Viṣṇu should go this song as encouragement, to the mountain-dweller, the wide-going bull, who this long-stretched space has measured out only with three steps.

4. His three foot-steps full of honey, unvanquished, according to their kind (in their own way), who alone has given support to three (worlds), earth, heaven and all creatures.[41]

His special epithets are *Urugāya*, wide-goer, *Urukrama*, wide-traverser and as has been noted by Geldner, *vi*+√*mā* is the catchword of Viṣṇu.[42]

Another element of the narrative which is emphasized in ṚV I.155.6 and VIII.100.5-7 is the form of Viṣṇu. In the stories woven in the Brāhmaṇas, Viṣṇu is said to have been dwarf which tradition persists later. In ṚV I.155.6 he is called 'of great body, and directing himself as per the rhythm of the singers. The youthful one, who is no longer a boy, goes again to fight.' In VII.99.1, it is said "you grow in your body beyond every measure, your greatness nobody reaches." The contrast between the descriptions of Viṣṇu in ṚV and the Brāhmaṇas together with the later tradition is significant. The particularly tall form of Viṣṇu which seems to have been referred to by implication in his wide traverses, is changed in the mythopoeic construction to a dwarf, short-statured. His short-stature and big steps which traverse the three worlds by contrast attribute divine power to him. The plausible reasons for this are discussed below.

The process of mythopoeic transformation of Ṛgvedic narratives seems to have the following elements. The Brāhmaṇas have taken the events from Ṛgveda and changed them into mythic narratives by converting the essential element into a religious one in the wake of which the whole event is transformed. For example, the tall stature of Viṣṇu is changed to a dwarf who is called the sacrifice in ŚB-narrative (I.2.5.1-4). With this identification of Viṣṇu with sacrifice, the subsequent course of events is changed out of recognition.

It appears that the real secret of Viṣṇu-saga lies in the name given to him i.e. Śipiviṣṭa, which appears in ṚV VII.100.5, 6, besides a reference in VI.99.7. VII.100.5, 6 run as follows:

5. I proclaim today, O Śipiviṣṭa, this name of yours, the great lord (*āryaḥ*) whom I know accurately; I, the weak one, praise you, the strong who sits on the throne beyond this world.
6. What was there to be blamed, O Viṣṇu, when you proclaimed yourself "I am *śipiviṣṭa*"? Do not conceal your form from us when you have appeared in the fight in another form.

The third element of Viṣṇu-saga narrated in Ṛgveda seems to be his fixing up *pṛthivī* with pegs especially the eastern end of *pṛthivī*. It is referred to in ṚV VII.99.2 as "you have supported the raging high

heaven and has rendered firm the eastern side of the earth", and again in the next stanza he is said to have "rendered the earth firm by pegs on all sides". There is passing mention to his lending support to higher residence in ṚV I.154.1.

The poet expresses gratitude to Viṣṇu for having "spread out the worlds for us to live" (VI.69.5). For a person in distress he traversed the earthly spaces thrice (VI.49.13). He trampled over this earth for land possession for Manu. His dispossessed people became stationary.

The first point to be noted is that the Ṛgveda refers only to wide-traversing of Viṣṇu for some reason or other. He is said to have travelled over the earth, or traversed the earthly spaces (*pārthivāni rajāṁsi*) thrice. It appears that *pṛthivī* as used in Ṛgveda did not refer to the whole of the earth but in the literal sense of wide expanse which may correspond to the plain between the rivers Gaṅgā-Yamunā on the east and Indus and its tributaries on the west. This is discussed in details later.[43] According to this interpretation, the wide travels of Viṣṇu may simply mean his travels around this plain thrice. In this context, reference to three strides of Viṣṇu appears to be metaphorical. What the references sought to convey was that he performed the spectacular feat of travelling around this wide plain thrice with as much ease as he would take in moving three steps. The myth of traversing the earth, atmosphere and the sky was built on the basis of the three traverses.

The version of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa runs as follows: 'Indra and Viṣṇu fought with the Asuras. After they had defeated them they said to them (i.e. the Asuras) "Let us divide!" The Asuras accepted the offer. Indra then said, "All through which Viṣṇu makes his three steps is ours, the other part is yours." Then Viṣṇu (lit. he) stepped through these (*lokas*), then over the Vedas and (lastly) over Vāc!'[44] Apparently, this story represents a stage which came later. But in the earlier part the devas were defeated by the asuras and had to ask for a piece of land as narrated in ŚB I.2.5.1 ff[45] cited above. The text further continues: "5. Now Viṣṇu was a dwarf. The gods, however, were not offended at this, but said: Much indeed they gave us, who gave us what is equal in size to the sacrifice. 6. Having then laid him down eastwards, they enclosed him on all (three) sides with the metres, saying (Vaj.S. I.27), on the south side, 'With the Gāyatri metre I enclose thee!' on the west side: 'With the Triṣṭubh metre I enclose thee!' on the north side: 'With the Jagatī metre I enclose thee!' 7. Having thus enclosed him on all (three) sides, and having placed Agni (the fire) on the east side, they went on worshipping and toiling with it (or him, i.e. Viṣṇu, the sacrifice). By it they obtained this entire earth and because they obtained by it this entire (earth), therefore it (the sacrificial ground) is called *vedi* (the altar). For this reason they say, 'As great as the altar is, so great

is the earth'; for by it (the altar) they obtained this entire (earth)..."

But Viṣṇu is tired after some time. As he could not escape elsewhere, he hid himself among the roots and plants. The devas search for him and again enclose him on the three sides, south, west and north. Then they remove the imperishable place of worship to the moon so that if they are defeated by the asuras, they can still prevail 'by praising and mortifying'. Putting together the ṚV and the ŚB version, it appears that in the beginning when the devas were defeated by the asuras, they begged for a patch of land on which they could stay. This was granted to them in the eastern direction, as stated in ŚB by saying that they laid down Viṣṇu eastwards. The land was probably just enough, ritualistically said to be one *vyāma*, which is equal to the length of person's outstretched arms. This should be enough for a person to lie down. Although a meagre gain, the devas accepted it humbly. The lying down of Viṣṇu eastwards is really the fixing up of this corner granted to them by the asuras, which is referred to in ṚV VII.99.2 as having been rendered firm the eastern side of *pṛthivī* by Viṣṇu. Probably on this patch of land the devas put up tents or sheds, which is suggested by the term *mayūkha*, a kind of peg (especially for hanging woven cloth or skins upon) as found in ṚV VII.99.3 in these words: "you have rendered the earth firm by pegs on all sides". This conjecture is supported by a reference in Sāyaṇa's gloss on AiBr. I.23 where he cites a tradition prevalent among the Taittirīyas: *Saumikavedyam prācīnavaṁśātpūrvabhāvisado nāmakamaṇḍapamevāsurápratikūlamakurvata| antarikṣalokādagnidhranāmakam dhiṣṇyamakurvata| dyulokādhavirdhānanāmake dve śakaṭe akurvata|* 'Known to the *Saumikas*' anterior to the old generations a dwelling called pavilion or shed was made proof against the asuras. In the *antarikṣa* world alertness of the name of *āgnidhra* was made (proof etc.); and in the celestial world, the two *śakaṭas*, carts, in the name of *havirdhāna*, the offerings, made proof against the asuras.' Besides confirming and elucidating the Ṛgvedic reading, this tradition, current amongst Taittirīyas, also supplies clues to the real significance of the threefold enclosure by metres of Viṣṇu, the sacrifice mentioned in ŚB passage. On the eastern side of the patch of land, they erected the tents and the three other sides were made unapproachable to intruders by lighting fires on the western side and by keeping the carts on the other two sides. The carts contained the belongings, supplies etc. of the devas.

Viṣṇu, however, was not satisfied with this small patch of land, escapes from it thrice and goes in three directions. This is how he traverses the *pṛthivī*, the wide expanse on the south, west and north. These are his three traverses, three steps. Significantly the word used in AiBr. VI.15 for this is not *pṛthivī* but *lokas* which originally meant open or free space. This means that having secured a foot-hold by begging, the devas operated from there in the three directions

and secured the land for the people who were destitute and distressed. This is referred to in ṚV VI.49.13, and by *manave bādhitāya*, in VII.100.4, and further for land for the possession of Manu, in VI.99.3. It seems probable that wherever Manu is referred to in the Viṣṇu-saga it really refers to the Aryan people or those who called themselves after their ancestor Manu. Thus all the land that was obtained by the defeat of the asuras was for the pleasure and the well-being of the children of Manu.

The question remains: where did Viṣṇu disappear? And why was he not perceived by the asuras? The answer to this is to be found in the reference to *śipiviṣṭa* in the ṚV and the Vāmana in the later tradition. As far as the Ṛgveda is concerned, it has been already pointed out that Viṣṇu is described as a young man, who is no more a boy, who is the might of the mighty and is broadly built (ṚV VII.100.3), a long-strider pointing to his tall stature. He becomes *śipiviṣṭa* in the battle. The poet goes further when he says "that what blame was there when you yourself declared yourself a *śipiviṣṭa*", which literally means that Viṣṇu disguised as *śipiviṣṭa* in the battle. This term *śipiviṣṭa* is obscure and means pervaded by rays, bald-headed, leprous or having no prepuce. Sāyaṇa glosses it as *śepa iva nirveṣṭitaḥ tejasānācchāditaḥ bhavāmīti*, I become like the male genitals which are not covered i.e. not covered by light and adds that on account of its indecent implications it is blamable. It is difficult to understand the gloss of Sāyaṇa as it is not clear why he connects *śipi* with *śepa* and *viṣṭa* with *nirveṣṭita*, the exact opposite in meaning. The indecency of the expression so clearly referred to by the Vedic poet becomes clear when *śipi* is taken to mean skin as suggested by Wilson (cited by Monier-Williams). The whole phrase may in that case be translated as one entered in the skin, which with the added phonetic similarity between *śepa* and *śipi* may throw indecent suggestion. But ignoring all these implications, if the word is treated in literal sense it may just mean that Viṣṇu had entered a skin (dress?) making himself unrecognisable, unseen. But as the Ṛgvedic poet himself puts it, Viṣṇu himself had assumed this name and probably along with it the disguise in order that he might remain incognito. Now this name *śipiviṣṭa* or the mask adopted by Viṣṇu was rejected by the later tradition on account of its indecent association and he was made a Vāmana, a dwarf, which was exactly opposed to his original form. Thus just as *śipiviṣṭa*-Viṣṇu goes out, in the same way Vāmana-Viṣṇu went out thrice. *Śipiviṣṭa*-Viṣṇu went out in the three directions and traversed the open space, spotted the weak points of the asuras, returned to the tent and prepared for an attack. This preparation for war is referred to as the hiding of the imperishable things—in the ritual, the place—on the moon, which in the ritual is the altar prepared by the *āgnidhra*. He smooths it. The Yajus that is recited with this reads as: "Lifting up the life-bestowing earth which they raised to the moon by prayers"[46] which in

plain language may mean that they dug deep into the life-bestowing soil and buried their precious belongings so that in case they are defeated, they may have access to it secretly.

The result of the excursions of Viṣṇu in the disguise of *śipiviṣṭa* was the evolution of a strategy and its implementation. This won the wide *antarikṣa* for them and spread out the *rajāṁsi* for the Aryan folk (ṚV VI.69.6). Both the terms *antarikṣa* and *rajāṁsi* appear to be used in the literal sense. The significance of *antarikṣa* is discussed in detail along with *pṛthivī* (see Chapter XII.21). It is shown there that it probably referred to the region through which the seven rivers flew. Had it been used in the current sense of 'middle space, air', it was not particularly necessary to conquer it for the Aryan folk. *Rajāṁsi* is used even in ṚV in the sense of cultivated or ploughed, arable land, fields and it seems here that the term is used in this sense.

With all this, if one goes back to the words of TS 6.6.4.4 where the rite *upaśaya* is explained, and the text says: *upaśayenaiva apānudanta*, (the asuras were) driven away (by the devas) while lying down i.e. Viṣṇu drove away the asuras while he was just lying down within the enclosure created for him.

The Viṣṇu-episode forms the background of the Divāli festival of the Hindus which, as one may guess, must be the celebrations for the victory of the devas. The motif in later artistic depictions where Viṣṇu is lying on the primordial waters on the back of Śeṣa the king of the serpents, is the depiction of the victory of the devas over Vṛtra whose patronymic was Ahi (serpent) and who was guarding the dammed waters. Thus, he lay down on the head of the asuras, symbolically represented by Vṛtra.

8. Uśanā Kavi

In the following pages, various elements of Viṣṇu's strategy are unravelled. First stage consisted of creating discord and dissension amongst the asuras, in short, what may be described as the policy of 'divide and rule'. The dissatisfaction material or otherwise was also exploited and in fact used systematically.

Uśanā is not mentioned very frequently in the Ṛgvedic hymns. But he has played a key role in tilting the balance in the favour of the devas. Not much information can be gathered about his antecedents from Ṛgveda itself. The later tradition, as reflected in the Brāhmaṇas and Mahābhārata, however, unanimously states him to be *purohita* of the asuras, who deserted them and joined the devas. The clever device, the

māyā, used by the devas, and referred to in the passage from AiBr. cited above, was to sow the seeds of dissension in the rank and file of the asuras. Uśanā Kāvya, as he is called, was the chief casualty of the asuras.

It is necessary at this stage to discuss the two terms *kavi* and *purohita*. The general sense of the term *kavi* emphasizes the element of intelligent insight into things and in Avesta *kavi* means protector, guardian from √*ku*, to watch over, to provide. In Sanskrit it has also the sense of leader, wise man, man of understanding. However, the term *kava* (Avesta), a cognate of *kavi*, acquired bad meaning on account of historical reasons. It came to refer to the princes of the royal families of Iran in the days of Zoroaster who were opposed to him. The sense acquired by the word then became 'wilfully blind', which is exactly opposed to the Sanskrit sense. It might probably mean that at a certain stage *kava* also had the same meaning. Uśanas is thus a man gifted with insight and not a poet or bard. He was also said to have been the *purohita* of the asuras. This term is translated as family priest or chaplain. The general sense of the term is, however, 'placed foremost, charged, commissioned, one holding a charge or commission'. Thus his being *purohita* really means that he was holding charge of the fighting operations which will automatically clear the mist around the tradition, viz., the *purohita* knowing the key to the victory. Incidentally, this justifies Uśanā being called *kavi*, an intelligent man with insight, most probably pertaining to warfare. Thus Uśanas was specially commissioned for this warfare.

The treachery was not limited to Uśanā alone. In the fights of Indra with the individual asuras or dāsas, he is said to have been aided by somebody or other or he is said to have killed a particular dāsa for some favourite of his. The names of most of these favourites appear to be of non-Sanskritic nature. It may be that they belonged to a group opposed to the asuras or they were the deserters. Indra killed Śuṣṇa[47] for Kutsa, who himself was harassed by Indra,[48] harassment being some indication of his non-Aryan origin as well as of one time inimical disposition towards each other. Śambara's fortresses were destroyed for Divodāsa, which appears to be an artificial name given to him on the same lines as devaśunī or devagandharva indicatory of his daivic inclinations, a Dāsa from *Div*, to which the devas traced their origin.

The Uśanas-episode may be analysed under four heads: 1. He was approached by Indra along with the devas and perhaps Kutsa acted as the go-between. 2. He manufactures a *vajra*, thunderbolt, for Indra. 3. He knows the secret of the cows. 4. He is rewarded handsomely by Indra for his services.

The Ṛgvedic sources on the first element are as follows:

V.29.9: When you two (Kutsa and yourself), O Indra, came into the house to Uśanas, with the powerful quick horses, there, you the victor, came on the same chariot with Kutsa with the gods. You had overcome Śuṣṇa.

X.22.6: When you two came, there Uśanas questioned you. With what object (have you come) to our house? You have come from afar to the mortal one, from heaven and from the earth.

I.51.11: When he had done well in the case of Uśanas Kāvya, Indra mounts the flying (horses), the best fliers. The powerful one (mounts) to the hastening (chariot), he made the waters flow in streams. He burst open the firm fortresses of Śuṣṇa.

V.31.8: ...You led Kutsa when you two had brought together the gods with Uśanas.

The manufacture of *vajra* is referred to in three places:

I.51.10: When Uśanas manufactured power with power, your power burst asunder the two world halves, by its greatness.

I.121.12: ...He fashioned the enemy-killing bolt which ended (the fight).

V.34.2: The munificent one had filled his stomach with soma and intoxicated himself with the sweet drink, when Uśanas who has the great weapons, presented him the weapon with thousand spikes about to kill the animal.

The secret of the cows is referred to in IX.87.3: The eloquent ṛṣi, the leader of the people, an expert ṛbhu (master of work), an Uśanas in the gift of seers: he discovered what was concealed from him viz. the secret name, the concealed name of the cows. (The hymn is addressed to Soma. However, Sāyaṇa paraphrases the second *pāda* of the stanza differently. He makes Uśanā the subject of the verb *viveda*, which reading seems to be supported by the JB passage discussed below.) VI.20.11 gives some idea of how Indra might have rewarded Uśanas: You, O Indra, were the first of the furtherers, when you sought for Uśanas Kāvya a way out. You have ceded for him the gift [as a dowry] Navavāstva, to the grandfather, his proper grandchild.

In TS 2.5.8.5, the devas appoint agni as their messenger, at the instance of Prajāpati, whereas Uśanas was the messenger of the asuras. In TMB vii.5.20, Uśanā Kāvya is said to have bestowed the *kāmadughas* on the devas: "Uśanā Kāvya was the priest (*purohita*) of the asuras.

To him the devas invoked with the *kāmadughas*. Therefore, he gave these *Auśanasas*. *Kāmadughas* are the *Auśanasas*." The term *kāmadughas* in this context means a mantra. Literally, it means 'milking the desires'. In other words it indicates that the devas fulfilled all the desires of Uśanas who in turn leaked out what are called the weak spots of the asuras to the devas which are called in the ritual language *auśanasas*.

In TMB xiv.12.5, poet Uśanā desires that whatever belonged to other poets should belong to him. He fulfils his wish through penance. He saw these *auśanasas* and through them obtained whatever he desired.

By far the most important contribution to the Uśanas-episode comes from JB I.125-127: "125. The devas and the asuras, contesting for long, did not win. Bṛhaspati was the priest of the devas, Uśana, that of the asuras. He did that whatever was done by Brahmā downwards, upwards. That (being) equalised, Brahmā did not win. Of the victory, Triśīrṣa gandharva came to know. It was like this:. On the water, his *naunagara* (ship-city) was floating. Then Indra came to know Triśīrṣa's knowledge about our victory. To his wife (who) also shared (?) this desire for victory, to her (he) asked to question (her) husband: It has been long since these devas and asuras are fighting, who will win? Having said this, he followed (her). He clung to the *naumaṇḍa* (essential part of the ship, the central cabin) becoming a leech or a grass. She asked her husband. It has been...who will win? 126. (He) said: (one should) not talk loudly; the ground is bestowed with ears.. (She) said: No, please say. He said: These two brāhmaṇas (priests) know this equally. Bṛhaspati among the devas and Uśana Kāvya among the asuras. Whatever they (two) will do will give equally. Whatever *āhutī* is given by one, is given by the other. These two coming together change suitably. Out of these (two) whoever causes these to meet with each other, they will win. Indra, having understood this, and becoming a parrot flew away. Seeing him fly, (he) said: On whom this green one flies, they will win. Uśanas Kāvya came to the asuras. To him (they) said: Oh seer, why do you prosper these people; you are ours and we are yours; come back to us. (He said): How, by what do you induce me (to go back to you)? By these Virocana Pralhada's excellent *kāmadughas*, by... Those two asuras were ashamed. The two followed. He said: These asuras are following us. Do so that we will follow them. They said like this... 127. He did not go to the asuras. Those two (?) with these *kāmadughas* went to the gods. They were glorified (after this follows ṚV IX.87.3). This is the *ṛk* about the cattle. Cattle is arrested (stopped) (one) comes in the possession of many, with these *ṛks* (one is) delighted. That is *auśanas*. Uśanā Kāvya desired the immortal gandharva world amongst the devas. He saw this *sāma*. He praised by this..."

Although the Brāhmaṇas are unanimous about the position of

Uśanā Kāvya, as far as Ṛgveda is concerned, no information is available. In the Ṛgveda IV.26.1, he is placed along with the legendary seer, poet. Indra ḥimself boasts of his identity with Kavi Uśanas. He is the eloquent *ṛṣi*, leader of his people, and a wise seer who can see the secrets. In Mahābhārata, he is identical with Śukrācārya, the teacher of the asuras who is also well-versed in strategy and in the art of fighting. In the Bhagavadgītā, he is one of the *vibhūtis* (manifestation) and the lord says "*munināmapyāham vyāsaḥ kavināmuśanā kavīḥ*", amongst the munis, I am Vyāsa, and amongst the poets, I am Uśanā.[49]

ṚV V.29.9, X.22.6, and I.51.11 speak of the meeting between Indra and the devas on the one hand and Uśanā Kāvya on the other. Indra goes to his house along with Kutsa who acted as a go-between, probably under compulsion from Indra. This is what Indra refers to in IV.26.1, where he speaks of having compelled Kutsa. Uśanas was unaware of the purpose of this visit. As soon as Indra succeeds in winning him over to his side, he leaves on the flying horses just as the parrot flies away in the JB. In JB-version Triśīrṣa gandharva is instrumental in divulging the secret of the victory. In ṚV, Uśanas appears to be a conspicuous figure who was "the eloquent *ṛṣi*, the leader of the people, an expert *ṛbhu*", who on account of his wisdom possessed the highest secrets, not only of cows (and treasures), but also of the weapons, as indicated in ṚV V.34.2. Thus winning him over to the side of the devas was doubly important. To this end the greed of Uśanas Kāvya as described in TMB xiv.12.5 came as a handy trait. To win him over, the devas gave him whatever he desired as mentioned in ṚV VI.20.11 where the alternative translation to Geldner's may be suggested: The term *varivasyam* may be translated as 'honour, luck, or treasure' (*varivas*, according to Nighaṇṭu and also Sāyaṇa who paraphrased it as *dhanam icchan*) instead of 'sought a way out' as is done by Geldner. Thus it may read as: "You, O Indra, were the first of the furtherers, when you sought honour (or treasure)[50] for Uśanas Kāvya." Thus Indra bestowed his bounty on Uśanas and he did not stop there. Probably, for the time being he even suppressed his enmity with Navavāstva whom he ultimately killed (ṚV X.49.6). What is meant by *anudeya* is a secondary gift, a surplus, and in this case, the restoration of the grandchild to the grandfather was the additional reward over and above other treasures. It seems that *guhyam nāma gonāmapīcyam* in ṚV IX.87.3 does not refer to the Vala-myth but to his insight by whose use he gained the wealth that he desired. The *auśanasas* is the advice and weapons given by Uśanas to Indra when he (viz. Uśanas) was invoked with the *Kāmadughas*, i.e. the desired gifts. This was the secret of the cows. There is less likelihood of a reference to Vala-myth as Saramā got the necessary information for Indra about the cows of the Paṇis. Thus Uśanā Kāvya aided the devas by right advice and by supplying the weapons, especially the *vajra*, bolt, which is the most characteristic weapon of Indra and the possession and wielding

of which acquired him an epithet viz. Vajrin, besides many victories. He used the same bolt in his battle with Vṛtra, his chief adversary. Although it is said that Uśanā manufactured it, it seems unlikely that he actually did so. As shown later, the thunderbolt was the weapon of the asuras. Indra came in its possession through the good offices of Uśanā, and this is expressed as Uśanā manufactured it.

It was not merely the treachery of Uśanā Kāvya that strengthened the hands of the devas. What helped most was the resultant improvement in weapons, in the second part of the strategy. This brings us to the problem of Vajra.

9. Vajra

The Vajra, thunderbolt, which Uśanā Kāvya is said to have fashioned, as also Tvaṣṭṛ in ṚV I.32.2, was Indra's exclusive weapon and on account of his skill in wielding it, he is called in ṚV *Vajrabhṛt*, bearing the bolt, *Vajrīvat*, armed with the bolt, *Vajradakṣiṇa*, holding the bolt in his right hand, *Vajrabāhu* or *Vajrahasta*, holding the *Vajra* in his hand, or *Vajrin*, armed with the bolt, which is the commoner epithet of them all. Not much information about the shape of Vajra is available in the ṚV. However, it is said that it was made of iron, and that it belonged to the category of the weapons called the *astras* i.e. those weapons which are operated by throwing.

In ṚV V.34.2 cited earlier where Uśanā is said to have presented a weapon with thousand *bhṛṣṭis* to Indra. Geldner has translated *bhṛṣṭi* as spike. The meaning of the word, however, is doubtful. It also occurs in ṚV I.133.5 in the context of the piśācī who is described as *piśaṅgabhṛṣṭi*. Geldner thinks that the weapon is Soma.

JB I.97 narrates the story of the birth of Vajra: The devas and the asuras were contesting. Those devas created a sharp-edged thunderbolt (which was) as if a man. (They through) him (? *tam*) warded off the asuras. Having pushed them away, he returned to the devas. The devas were frightened. They attacked him, and broke him into three. Broken into three, he remained the same...

It seems likely that the vajra was similar to *triśūla*. A double *triśūla* is found on some of the Assyrian bas-reliefs, where it is depicted as having the three edges on each side with the handle in between.

Before acquiring the thunderbolt, the devas and the asuras were fighting with the staves and bows (*daṇḍairdhanubhiśca*) and did not succeed in defeating each other. Thereupon they started pairing the masculine and feminine words with a view to ending the battle conclusively.[51]

AiBr. II.31 states in the ritual language the reason of the balance in the strength of the devas and the asuras: "The Asuras performed at the sacrifice all that the Devas performed. The Asuras became thus of equal power (with the Devas) and did not yield to them (in any respect). Thereupon the Devas saw (by their mental eyes) the *tūṣṇīṁ śaṁsa* i.e. silent praise. The Asuras (not knowing it) did not perform this (ceremony) of the Devas. This "silent praise" is the silent (latent) essence (of the *mantras*). Whatever weapon (Vajra) the Devas raised against the Asuras, the latter got aware of them. The Devas then saw the silent praise as their weapon; they raised it, but the Asuras did not become aware of it. The Devas aimed it at the Asuras and defeated the latter who did not perceive (the weapon aimed at them). Thereupon the Devas became the masters of the Asuras..."[52]

This may simply be interpreted as suggesting that the asuras were alert every time they were attacked, but when taken unawares, they succumbed to the attack.

The discussion of archaeological material shows that this original double *triśūla* was transformed by the asuras into a weapon which could perform two kinds of functions. It could be thrown and could be held as well.

10. The puras in the Brāhmaṇas

The Ṛgvedic fortresses, as has been seen, were earthly. There was nothing mythopoeic about the houses being made of burnt bricks or stones or reeds. These puras are transformed into the puras of iron, silver and gold in the Brāhmaṇas.

AiBr. I.23 states this transformation thus: "The Devas and the Asuras were fighting in these worlds. The Asuras made these worlds fortified castles, just as the strongest and most powerful (kings) do. Thus they made the earth an iron castle, the air a silver, the sky a golden castle. Thus they made these worlds castles. The devas said these asuras have made these worlds in opposition to these castles. They made out of the earth in opposition (to the iron castle of the Asuras) a sitting room (*sadas*), out of the air a fire place (*āgnidhrīya*), and of the sky two repositories of food (*havirdhāna*). They made these worlds in opposition to the castles (into which the three worlds had been transformed by the Asuras). The gods said let us perform the burnt offerings called *upasads* (i.e. besieging). For by means of an *upasad*, i.e. besieging they conquer a large (fortified) town."[53] The footnote of Haug to *upasads* is worth noting: "There is observable throughout this chapter a pun between the two meanings of upasad 'siege' and a certain ceremony." This is important because it directly supports the hypothesis put forth here that the rituals of the Brāhmaṇas are a symbolic per-

formance of the events which have taken place in the remote past and as such it is possible to retrieve them from the mesh of rites and ceremonies. Moreover, it also confirms the phenomenon of double meaning words noted frequently in this work. The language and the actions both supply the evidence. The mythopoeic construction is clearly observable in this passage: Those fortresses which were built here on the earth have suddenly come to occupy the whole worlds earthly, spatial and celestial! The brick and stone is transformed into gold and silver. For the creation of myth some of the crucial terms have been given double meanings. The original meaning fits in the context of war. The second connotation fits with the ritual imbibing within it symbolically the original significance. As for example, *upasad* with its original meaning of siege has been given the ritual connotation of 'burnt offerings'. The question that poses itself is, why burnt? The answer is not far to seek. It probably refers to a siege in which fire was used.

The asuras had fortified cities when the devas had a shed, probably a fire outside the shed for cooking and other purposes and some supplies of food which were probably stored in the carts, *śakaṭas*. The AiBr. passage supports the scheme suggested subsequently about *pṛthivī*, *antarikṣa* and *div* which were earthly regions. The three worlds as applied to the earthly existence of the devas become clear in this passage. It is not only inferred that the devas came in two *śakaṭas* referred to by Sāyaṇa in his gloss on this passage and lived in an improvised shed, but the ŚB goes even further and it is said in VI.8.1.1-2 that while the asuras were sitting in the houses, the devas moved in carts (*devāścakramacarañchālāmasurā āsan*). The same story with some changes is repeated in ŚB III.4.4.3-4 and GB II.2.7. The latter passage also repeats the tradition about the devas not having houses. In fact they attribute their defeat to their being houseless (*anāyatanā vai smaḥ*).

The term *upasad*, as has been noted by Haug, is used in a dual sense. It means siege and the use of a type of fire different from the three usual types viz. *gārhapatya* (household), *dakṣiṇa* (right) and *āhavanīya* (invocation). It appears that in both senses it is significant and for a correct understanding it may be interpreted as a siege in which fire was used. This is suggested by its significance in the rite as a fire not of the usual types. This will become clearer when the role of agni in the defeat of the asuras is discussed.

The tradition of three *puras* continues into MBh, their construction being attributed to Maya. In MBh, 5.3567 ff. Hiraṇyapura is referred to as '*puravam*' and the construction is attributed to Viśvakarmā whereas the architectural planning (*manasā sṛṣṭam*) was done by Maya. It was located on the Pātālatala, surface of Pātāla, which is identified by A. Cunningham with modern Haiderabad (Sindh) in the light of informa-

tion supplied by Alexander's historians and Hieun Tsang's diary.[54] This Hiraṇyapura is attributed to asuras Kālakhañjas who are also mentioned in TaiBr. I.1.2.4-6.

There is yet another piece of information about the destruction of the fortresses of the asuras. This needs to be placed alongside the Vṛtra-episode. "The devas and the asuras were engaged in contest. The devas, by *paurumadga*, inundation of fortresses, inundated the fortresses of the asuras. The fortresses were inundated. By this *paurumadga* the sinful enemies are drowned."[55] In the context of Vṛtra-episode, this *paurumadga* may indicate that after having killed Vṛtra, the waters of seven rivers were allowed to flow down resulting in untimely floods which inundated the fortified towns of the asuras, on the basis of which the Brāhmaṇas constructed the rite of *paurumadga*, by whose performance the sinful enemies may be drowned.

11. Rakṣohā Agni

Besides the creation of dissension in the enemies' rank and file, acquisition of new weapons and improved military strategy, the assistance rendered by agni, fire, proved to be invaluable. Exclusive tributes are paid to agni in more than two hundred hymns, apart from those in which he is mentioned along with others. Thus next to Indra, he becomes the most celebrated deity. This profound respect and gratitude were inspired by the assistance rendered by him in the battles against the asuras, rakṣas, dasyus and Paṇis. He came to Indra's help in killing Vṛtra and Śuṣṇa. Along with Indra, he is called Purandara (ṚV VII.6.2; 5.3), a unique honour of sharing a title with Indra. One may get a faint idea of what agni did in the battles from some ṚV hymns: ṚV VII.5.3 describes how agni was used by the Purus to break the fortresses which belonged to the dark races who fled, when pursued by agni, leaving behind their possessions. With this may be compared TaiBr. II.4.6.7-8 which is discussed in details later (see Chapter IX.1). The fortresses have already become the *armakas*, deserted ruins, the inhabitants having left when these were set fire to by the devas. In ṚV VII.5.9 it is said, "The gods transferred the asura status to you, because they take willingly your advice, O you honoured like Mitra. You, O agni, drove the Dasyus out of their home when you created wide light for the Aryans." He is praised for having overthrown "the ignorant, the tuft-headed misspeaking (*mṛdhravācaḥ*) Paṇis who were without faith, without bliss and sacrifice. Further and further has Agni pressed these Dasyus. He, the first one, has made the non-sacrificers (as) the last" (ṚV VII.6.3). He has made by his superpower the clans of Nahuṣ tribute payers, after he had overthrown them (ṚV VII.6.5). In ṚV III.15.4 the conquest of the fortresses and wealth is attributed to agni: 'Shine, O Agni, as an untamed bull you who have conquered

all fortresses and lucky goods as the leader of the sacrifice, of the first protecting spirit, O Jātavedas, of the high one, you good leader.' Not only did agni break the fortresses but he has conquered the territories which lay "from the sea on this side and that, agni has taken over from the heaven (*div*) and from the earth (*pṛthivī*)" (ṚV VII.6.7). It is not clear whether the eastern and western seas are referred to.

Glowing tributes are paid to his leadership. As is said, "you are the king of human folks. By fight you have granted freedom to the gods."[56] "You who kill most of the enemies, you shook off the Dasyus."[57]

'O Agni burn out all the dark men. Be the guardian of the sacrifice...'[58] 'Shining with broad effulgence drive the enemies' dark men and plagues, I might be in the protection of the high, well-protecting person.'[59] 'Burn well, O Agni, the near-standing enemies; burn the bad words of the avaricious foreigners; burn O you good one, whom you recognise as unrecognised...'[60] 'Stand up, O Agni, oppose yourself broadly, burn down the enemies...'[61] 'Raise yourself up, push them away, show your divine (strength). Unstring the bows of evil spirits, crush the enemies, related as well as unrelated.'[61a] 'Indra and Agni shook the Dāsa-owned ninety puras, with one single act.'[62] 'Indra killed, Agni burnt down before midday the Dasyus.'[63] 'Chase away therefore, the Dasyus with the weapons, making your own body strong.'[64] Agni the (newly) born shone forth killing the Dasyus, destroying the darkness by his light.

The last stages of the struggle are described thus: "Out of fear of thee, the dark clans proceeded while they left behind their possessions without fight, when you O Agni Vaiśvānara flaming for Puru shone forth breaking the fortresses... 'You drove the Dasyus, O Agni, out of their homes when you created further light for the Aryans'."[65] In ṚV VII.13.1 Agni is called *asuraghna*, killer of the asuras and probably fire was used to destroy the fortresses of Śuṣṇa which is referred to vaguely in ṚV VIII.40.11 and also in I.59.6. He is called *rakṣohā* and *vṛtrahantama* in many places. The tributes to agni did not stop here: The poet expresses his gratitude by saying "by your might you have freed the gods from the shame",[66] which raises the question: What shame? Shame of the defeat already suffered at the hands of the asuras? In that case, this confirms the validity of the Brahmanic narratives. How the agni burnt is also described in the most realistic manner as for example in ṚV VII.7.2: "Come, O Agni, willingly, your usual way, delighted in the friendship of gods, making with your impetuosity the surface of the earth vibrating, with your sound, devouring everything with your teeth, burning down the trees greedily." Agni is said to have made the walls soft by his weapons which once again supports the inter-

pretation of *āyasī* as being made of reeds which could burn easily. Had they been of iron, ordinary fire could not have melted them neither is it conceivable that a whole fortress could have been built out of iron. Had it been earthen plastered wall, over the wooden or bamboo work, the bamboo wood may burn leaving the plaster hardened.

In general, there is little mythoposm associated with agni, except the invocation to the embodiment of agni which may be attributed to the early deification of fire.

Thus the earliest tradition as preserved in ṚV supplies some information about the use of fire by the devas as a part of the strategy. This is confirmed by the Brāhmaṇa-narratives which supply the details of the events. ŚB I.2.4.8-13 gives the most graphic description: '8. The gods and the Asuras both of them sprung from Prajāpati were contending for superiority. The gods vanquished the Asuras; and yet these afterwards harassed them again. 9. The gods then said: "We do, no doubt, vanquish the Asuras, but nevertheless they afterwards harass us. How then can we vanquish them so that we need not fight them again?" 10. Agni then said: 'By fleeing northwards they escape from us.' By fleeing northwards they had indeed escaped from them. 11. Agni said: 'I will go round to the northern side, and you will then shut them in from here; and whilst shutting them in, we will put them down by these (three) worlds; and from what the fourth world there is beyond these (three) they will not be able to raise again. 12. Agni thereupon went round to the northern side and they (the other gods) shut them in from here; and whilst shutting them in, they put them down with these (three) worlds; and from what fourth world there is beyond these (three), they did not rise again. Now this same (expulsion of the Asuras) is virtually the same act as the flinging away of the grassbush.[67] 13. The Āgnidhra goes round to the north, for he is virtually the same person as Agni himself. The Adhvaryu then shuts in from here; and whilst shutting them in he puts them down by means of these (three) worlds; and from what fourth world there is beyond these (three) they do not rise again...'[68]

Briefly, bereft of its ritualistic repetition, the passage appears to imply that the devas created a conflagration in the northern direction in order to block the way of the fleeing asuras.

Narratives in other Brāhamaṇas support this. As for example: TaiBr. I.6.6.1 'The devas and the asuras were engaged in contest. He, agni said: This my multi-mouthed body, appease it. Then surpass the asuras. Those devas offered the *puroḍāś aṣṭākapāla* in many mouths of Agni. That multi-mouthed agni was pleased with his share of offerings. He multiplied his mouths four-fold. Then the devas won and the asuras were defeated.' The use of fire or the scorch earth policy practised by

the devas is put in another passage in a concrete manner: In TaiBr. 1.7.1.2 The devas and the asuras were engaged in contest. The devas said to agni, we shall surpass the asuras through your valour. He said 'I will split myself into three.' Thus he split himself in three... He said 'Who is this fourth one?' 'I am', said Indra.[69]

AiBr. III.39 version of the same narrative runs as follows: "The Devas went to war with the Asuras, in order to defeat them. Agni was not willing to follow them. The Devas then said to him, "Go thou also, for thou art one of us." He said, 'I shall not go unless a ceremony of praise is performed for me. Do ye that now.' So they did... After having been praised, he followed them. He, having assumed the shape of three rows, attacked in three battle lines the Asuras... He defeated them beyond expectation. Thence the devas put down the Asuras."[70] The number three is reminiscent of the three traverses of Viṣṇu and the three metres which were engaged to close Viṣṇu in the enclosure. Are they, on the analogy of the ŚB, used to suggest the identity of directions? The answer to this question may be had from AiBr. VII.4. "The Devas spread the sacrifice. When doing so, the Asuras approached them, thinking let us obstruct their sacrifice. They attacked them from the right side, thinking this to be the weak point. The Devas awoke and posted two of their members, Mitra and Varuṇa, on the right side. Through the assistance of these two, the Devas drove the Asuras and the Rākṣasas away from the morning libation. And thus the sacrificers drive them away...thence the Maitrāvaruṇa priest repeats the Maitrāvaruṇa Śastra at the morning centre of the sacrifice. The Devas awoke, posted there Indra and defeated through his assistance the enemies... The Asuras thus defeated, attacked the sacrifice on the northern side. The Devas posted on this side Indrāgni and defeated thus the Asuras. The Asuras defeated on the northern side, marched towards the eastern part. The Devas awoke and posted Agni eastwards at the morning libation. Through Agni, the Devas drove the Asuras and the Rākṣasas away from the eastern front... Asuras went westwards...and were driven away from the western direction...[71]

Curiously enough, the word *śastra* used to describe the *mantra* recited by the priest, signifies praise, invocation in ritual context but also means sword. Thus the original context of the battle is never forgotten. In fact, these double-meaning words serve to emphasise and remind the sacrificer of it. However, the more important information to be derived from the formulaic representation is that Indra and agni together defeated the asuras on the northern side and agni alone fended them off on the eastern side. He drove the asuras from the western direction. The whole symbolism of this rite becomes meaningful when read in the context of the Viṣṇu narrative discussed above. The *sada* or tent referred to there as sacrifice is the same as the sacrifice in this

rite. Thus whatever patch of land was granted to the devas originally and the temporary shelters constructed on it were attacked by the asuras repeatedly. The passage under discussion describes how the devas protected themselves and also expanded their territory.

AiBr. III.43 states explicitly the reasons for the use of the symbolism. It is said: The *Agniṣṭoma* is Agni. It is called so, because they (the gods) praised him with this *stoma*. They called it so to hide the proper meaning of the word; for the gods like to hide the proper meaning of words.[71a]

The transparent symbolism of the battles of the devas and the asuras can be seen in yet another rite called the *agniṣṭoma ukthya*. The legend is narrated thus: 'The devas took shelter in the *agniṣṭoma* and the Asuras in the *ukthas*.[72] Both being thus of equal strength, the gods could not turn them out. One of the *ṛṣis* Bhāradvāja saw them (and said), "these Asuras have entered the *ukthas* (*śastras*); but none else sees them." He called out to Agni with the mantra: *ehy u ṣu bravāṇi* (ṚV VI.16.16). The *itarā giraḥ* i.e. other voices (mentioned in this verse) are those of the Asuras. Agni rose thereupon and said: "What is it, then, that the lean, long, pale has to tell me?" For Bhāradvāja was lean, of high stature, and pale. He answered, "these Asuras have entered the *ukthas* (*śastras*); but nobody is aware of them". Agni then turned into a horse, ran against them and overtook them.'[73] The term *uktha* is considered to be an irregular past passive participle of √*vac* and signifies an eulogy, praise, etc. Sāyaṇa glosses it as *ukthanāmakāni stotrāṇi śastrāṇi ca*, the eulogies and the praise-songs called *ukthas*. *Śastra* also means sword. *Agniṣṭoma* is also a song of praise of agni. Now in the ritualistic sense it may mean that both the devas and the asuras praised agni and were thus of equal strength. Now ṚV VI.16.16: "Come rather here. I shall speak it to you: O Agni, the other praises are only thus. You should strengthen yourself by these soma-drops." This is the *ṛc* on which this rite of *uktha* is based. The AiBr. explains that the *itarā giraḥ* i.e. other praises are those of the asuras which refers to the *uktha* as an eulogy. There seems to be some connection between the soma-drops offered to agni and the other praises. They may have been meant as parallel to each other. Thus the praises bestowed on agni through *agniṣṭoma* are to be compared with drops with which agni is asked to strengthen himself. Further, other words are not as good as soma-drops and so agni should not pay heed to them. *Bṛhad-uktham*, great *uktha*, forms a series of verses which are recited at the end of *agni-cayana*, production of ritual fire and in MBh *ukthas* (m) is a form of agni.

If it is remembered that *agniṣṭoma* is agni (AiBr. III.43 cited above), then it is possible that *uktha* may also have been agni. The words attributed to Bhāradvāja are significant. According to him, the

asuras had entered the *ukthas* but nobody was aware of them. If, as has been suggested above, *uktha* is interpreted as fire, probably immediately after its production, then it may mean that when the devas were busy setting fire to the houses of the asuras, the asuras were also trying to set fire to the shelters of the devas.

In TS 6.2.2.6, the devas are afraid and therefore enter fire and make agni a protected abode from where they defeat the asuras. "The devas and the asuras were engaged in contest. Those devas frightened entered agni... They, having made agni, the *varutha* or secure abode, defeated the asuras." This passage may be compared with AiBr. VII.4 cited above. There agni protected the devas and also drove away the asuras. Though the passage does not add anything to the knowledge of the *devāsura* conflict, the word *varutha* is probably the non-Sanskritic form of *vṛta* i.e. protected, derived from √*vṛ*, to protect. Vṛtra, as is already noted, may be derived from √*vṛ*. The Avestan equivalent of Vṛtra is Verethra and the ta-tha equivalence in Ṛgveda and Avesta also probably holds good in the language from which the word *varutha* was borrowed.

TaiBr. I.6.2.5-7 describes the role played by agni in the conquest of the asuras: The devas and the asuras were engaged in a contest. That agni said: Give oblations in front of me and by my mouth conquer the asuras. (Make) me the second, said Soma. Conquer by making me king. (Make) me the third, said Savitā. Win under my incitement. (Make) me the fourth, said Sarasvatī. I shall present you a limb. Make me the fifth, said Pūṣan. Win when I conduct. Thus the devas conquered the asuras through agni's mouth, when Soma was king, Savitā was inciter, Sarasvatī lent her limb and Pūṣan was conductor. Thus the devas conquered.

The oblations offered to agni were the asuras, dasyus, rakṣas and their fortified towns. The devas' fondness for Soma is well known. Indra is said to have drunk large quantities of the exhilarating drink before his heroic deeds. Under the influence of Soma the devas performed the valorous deeds. Thus metaphorically Soma was the king. Besides setting fire to the *puras*, the devas have also inundated them with the help of the limb of Sarasvatī. In the *agniṣṭoma* sacrifice ceremonies continue for five days. Does it have any connection with the ur-incident in which fire was found useful?

Thus with the assistance of fire with its many mouths which devoured all that came their way—the asuras, the rakṣas, the dasyus, Paṇis, their properties, movable and immovable—the devas conquered this broad plain. Viṣṇu's three steps covered the three worlds, the Vedas and the speech. The devas appreciated the labours of agni and after the

struggle wanted to reward him suitably: The hymn ṚV X.124 is in the form of a conversation between Indra and agni. Although the hymn is metaphorical, it gives some idea of what happened:

1. Indra: O Agni, come to our sacrifice which has five movements, three layers and seven threads. You should be our offering-bearer and leader. Already you have lain long enduring in darkness.
2. Agni: Making myself away from him secretly, I go (to) the god, from the ungod, seeing immortality before me. When I leave him who was friendly in an unfriendly way, I go from one's regular friendship to the foreign kinship.
3. When I see the guest in the other branch, I pass through many forms of right custom. I say to father Asura, a friendly word: From exclusion, I arrive now for a share in the sacrifice.
4. Many years I was active in him. As I selected Indra, I give up the father. Agni, Soma, Varuṇa, go away. The lordship has expended itself. This I support by my assent.
5. Indra: The Asuras have now lost their magic power (*nirmāyā*). If you, O Varuṇa, wish to love me, then come O king, who separates wrong from right to the overlordship of my kingdom.

Along with this hymn may be considered a dialogue between Varuṇa and Indra in ṚV IV.42:

1. Varuṇa: The lordship belongs to me anew, the lifelong prince as all the immortal ones (testify us). The gods follow the advice of Varuṇa. I rule over the people of the highest physical forms.
2. I, Varuṇa, am the king; first of all the Asura-status was decided for me. The gods follow the advice of Varuṇa etc.
3. I, Varuṇa, am Indra. Both these wide, deep and firmly established spaces I know in the entire greatness and all creatures like Tvaṣṭṛ. I have brought both the worlds into existence and (I) uphold them.
4. I made the dripping waters swell. In the seat of the (eternal) law, I hold the heaven. According to the law, the son of Aditī is the lawful lord and he has spread over the earth three fold.
5. Indra: The people who ride excellent horses, invoke *me* when they are surrounded in the battle. I incite the quarrel, I the munificent Indra. I raise the dust and am of the overpowering strength.
6. I have done this all. No divine power holds me, the irresistible one. When Soma drafts and songs have intoxicated me, then the two unlimited spaces get into terror.
7. Varuṇa: All creatures know this of you. You proclaim these (deeds) to Varuṇa, O master! You are known as Vṛtra-killer. And you, O Indra, make the impeded rivers flow.

The hymn X.124 is obviously sung to celebrate the defeat of the

asuras. It reflects the new arrangements and alignments in the post-defeat period. In the first verse running parallel to X.51.5,7 agni is invited to come to the sacrifice and be the leader of the gods. 'His having lain long enduring darkness' is to be referred to the secret use of agni in the *devāsura* struggle. It is again referred to by agni in the next verse when agni says that he went away secretly from him, i.e. father Asura, that is to say, the god Asura. This secret alliance with the devas was made during the war when they agreed to give oblation to him and make him the leader. This was the decision made by the devas to use fire in their battles against the asuras. The oblations might have been the things destroyed by them. Thus godhood was bestowed on him and he has become from an ungodly one a god (*adevāddevaḥ*), from the one who was excluded from sacrifice the one who receives a share in them *ayajñiyāt yajñiyāṁsam bhāgamemi* in v. 3. He leaves behind father Asura who was friendly to him in an unfriendly way and goes from regular friendship to the kinship with the devas, the foreigners. This friendship with father Asura was of long-standing which is referred to in v. 4. When agni decides to stay with the devas, as represented by Indra, he gives up father Asura. Along with him go Varuṇa and Soma too. This means that Varuṇa and Soma originally belonged to the asuras which is supported by the implications of IV.42 in general and the reference to "first of all the asura-status was decided for me" i.e. I was the first one to bear the *asuryāṇi*, the insignia of the asuras. Also reference to lordship coming to him anew means he was the lord before and for some reason his lordship was lost but now it was restored to him. As the Brāhmaṇa narratives tell, Soma was stolen by the gods from the gandharvas. This is discussed in that context.

The lordship, mentioned in v. 4 of X.124 is most probably the lordship of father Asura. This lordship has expended itself with the defeat of the asuras i.e. their having become powerless (*nirmāyā*) which is put in Indra's mouth in v. 5.

There Indra invites Varuṇa to be the king of his kingdom and that is referred to by Varuṇa in IV.42. The words "if you wish to love me" in X.124.6 really mean if you love me even when I have destroyed your dominion, come to the overlordship of my kingdom.

Varuṇa has obviously accepted the overlordship offered to him by Indra in X.124.6. In IV.42, he is once again the king, the devas follow his advice and he rules over the people of the highest physical forms. "I, Varuṇa, am Indra" in v. 3 probably refers to the identical role of Indra and Varuṇa in the post-defeat period. He could boast of his knowledge of the two wide spaces and the creatures therein. He had made the dripping waters swell by building the dam. The dam was guarded by Vṛtra whom Indra killed and released the waters. This

heroic act of Indra is referred to by Varuṇa in v. 7, albeit with a certain gloom and nostalgia!

The asuras were defeated. Their king Varuṇa was installed as the king of the devas, agni who was the friend of the god Asura went over to the devas and received the sacrifices of Indra and the devas, and Soma became *the* drink of Indra.

Viṣṇu covered in his three steps the three worlds, the Vedas and the speech. Did the Vedas belong to the asuras?

In the Avesta, Ahura-Mazda the highest divinity is worshipped through fire which is kept burning by the offerings of wood. Scholars have noted many similarities in the Avestan and Vedic rites and terminology, especially connected with the sacrifices, if they could be so called. The sacrifices are reduced to a few rites in the Avesta. M. Haug has pointed out some of the resemblances in the rites of the Brāhmaṇas and the Zend-Avesta. For example, the Vedic *iṣṭi* and *āhuti* are Avestan *ishti* and *azuiti*, where "the original peculiar significations are lost and only the general meanings 'gift' and 'invocation or praise' have survived". Avestan *Yajishn* contains all the elements which constitute parts of the *Jyotiṣṭoma* cycle of sacrifices, the prototype of all the Soma sacrifices. The *Agniṣṭoma*, the opening sacrifice of this cycle, bears similarities to the *Yajishn*, though the latter ceremony is shorter and the rites are in keeping with the general spirit of the Zoroastrian religion. Vedic religion allows throwing into fire meat and animal sacrifice to the gods. This is also partaken by priest and sacrificer. In the Avestan ceremony, no animal is killed, only some hairs of an ox is placed in a small vessel and shown along with other things to fire. (This custom runs parallel to some of the Hindu cultic practices where the offering to the god is offered i.e. shown as *naivedyam* and then partaken by the devotee as the *prasāda*.) The *Puroḍāś* of the Brāhmaṇas is changed into a flat kind of bread called *Darun* in Avesta. Both the religions have the ceremonies centring around Soma. "The contrivances used for obtaining the Soma juice as well as the vessels employed are somewhat different, but on closer inquiry, an original identity may be recognised. No juice is thrown into fire by the Parasi priests but on the contrary the brāhmaṇa priests offer them to the gods by throwing it into fire." Haug has also pointed out the similarity between the *Āpri* ceremony of the Brāhmaṇas and *Āfriṅgan* of the Avesta, of *Darśa-pūrṇamasa-iṣṭi* with *Darun*, of *Cāturmāsya iṣṭi* with *Gahanbar* which is celebrated six times a year. The number of priests in Vedic ceremonies is larger than in their Avestan counterparts, yet the terminological and hence functional, resemblances are obvious. *Hotā*, reciter of the *mantras* of Ṛgveda, is identical with *Zaota*; *Adhvaryu* or managing priest with *Rathwi*, who is only the servant of *Zaota* or chief priest. *Atarevaksho* of Avesta corresponds with *agnidhra* of the

Brāhmaṇas.[74] Among the metres used in Yajurveda seven are marked āsuri, such as Gāyatri-āsuri, Uṣṇiḥ-āsuri etc. Haug has also noted the similarities in the observances of domestic rites. For example, the use of *pañcagavyam* or five products of the most sacred animal, the cow and *gomez* in the great purification ceremony called *Barashnom* of nine nights. The investiture with the sacred thread (*aiwyoṅhanem* and *yajñopavīta* in Brahmanism) is enjoined as a religious duty in both the religions.[75]

These similarities are usually attributed to a schism by which the Aryans were split into Indo-Aryans represented by their literature from Ṛgveda onwards and the Iranians whose supreme deity was the Ahura-Mazda. But when the similarities and/or dissimilarities—as will be shown subsequently—are examined in the light of the statements in the Ṛgveda and in the Brāhmaṇas the position may be different from that of the present one. As already noted, agni, who was receiving the homage from father Asura whose friend he was for a long time, was himself an *adeva*, non-god. He was also not receiving any share in the sacrifice, *ayajñiyāt yajñīyam bhāgamemī*. These confessions from agni suggest that the fire-worship was in vogue among asuras even before the devas had known anything about it. The devas learnt the use of fire for various purposes ranging from battles to the religious worship at a later stage and probably during their struggle with the asuras. The grand victory they scored over the asuras was through the scorch-earth policy. After the victory, they decided to pay homage to agni and borrowed the rites which asuras already had. This is the reason for similarity and this is confirmed by the statement of the Brāhmaṇas that Viṣṇu, the dwarf even covered the sacrifices of the asuras. When certain rites were borrowed by the devas changes were introduced most probably in the light of the foregone *devāsura* struggle which has been already discussed. This additional significance increased the volume of the Vedas and may be one of the reasons of the brevity of the Avestan Gāthā-literature in comparison to Yajurveda, Sāmaveda and Brāhmaṇas. The additional element of ritual was mainly based on the events that took place in the *devāsura* conflict, which explains why the narratives are given as the background of the rites. Thus the rites given in the Yasna may represent elements of an older religion which centred around the deity Asura. The fundamental belief in adopting the fire-worship seems to be that the asuras prospered materially because of the fire worship, which was strengthened by the victory over the asuras through the use of fire. The devas adopted fire worship as their religion with changes to suit their own need on the basis of the victories. The fundamental difference between the rites of the asuras and the devas seems to centre on the not-throwing and throwing anything in the fire. The mode of worship of the devas is reminiscent of the battles in which the agni burnt the houses, the rakṣas, the asuras, the dasyus, with one single flame. This burning

is commemorated by throwing the meat and other *havyas* into fire. Thus having borrowed the basic idea of fire-worship from the asuras, it was modified in certain details on the basis of the latest events in the *devāsura* struggle. The devas transformed it into an elaborate sacrificial system.

12. The religion of the Asuras

The Ṛgveda does not talk much about the religion of the asuras but references, contrasting it with that of the devas, dasyus and dāsas abound. There the dasyu is called *akarman*, riteless (X.22.8), *abrahman*, without the prayer (IV.16.9), *ayajvan* (VIII.70.11), not sacrificing, *ayajyu* (VII.6.3), *avrata*, without vows, undisciplined (I.51.8 ; 175.3, VI.14.3, IX.41.2), *anyavrata*, bound by different vows (VIII.70.11), *apavrata*, of bad vows (V.42.9), *brahmadviṣa*, haters of brahma (loc. cit.), *śiśna-devāḥ*, having phallus as god (VII.21.5, X.99.3).

The Brāhmaṇas do not refer to the dasyus or dāsas or their religion; they speak only of differences in the religious practices of the asuras. A common inheritance of the devas and the asuras is said to have been appropriated by the devas as their own. The latter might be really a whitewashed version of the former tradition.

As the narrative goes in ŚB I.9.2.34-35: "34. Now the gods and the asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati were contending about this sacrifice, (that is, their) father Prajāpati, the year. 'Ours it (he) shall be! Ours it shall be' they said. 35. Thereupon the gods obtained possession of the whole of the sacrifice and dispossessed those (asuras) of it by (giving them) what was the worst part of the sacrifice, to wit, with the blood of the victim (they dispossessed them) of the animal sacrifice, and with the refuse of the rice of the havir yajña. 'May they be duly dispossessed of the sacrifice', they thought; for he indeed is duly dispossessed who is dispossessed even while obtaining a (worthless) share..."[76]

Dispossessing the asuras of the sacrifice is expressed ritually i.e. if a person is not given his due share in the sacrifice, then he is as good as dispossessed of it.

About the sacrifice *Sautrāmaṇi* it is said in ŚB XII.9.3.7-9: 'He said, what do you wish to do it? He said, formerly this sacrifice *Sautrāmaṇi* (belonged to) was of the asuras. It came to the devas: As he came, the waters became delighted, just as when the glory (good) comes (people) are delighted. To him they said, do come, O lord. He said, 'I am afraid of leading.' 'Of what is the lord afraid?' 'Of the asuras' (said he). 'All right', said the waters and led. Therefore, whoever becomes the deadly weapon, he is afraid of leading (leads with fear). As the waters led, they became conductor...'[77]

As is said in the beginning of the above citation *Sautrāmaṇi* was the sacrifice of the asuras and was adopted by the devas. The evidence for this is found in the sacrificial materials used. And that is *surā*, wine. Bloomfield[78] in his article on the Namucī-episode has noted that "the employment of the *Sautrāmaṇi* ceremony as the expiatory performance of one who vomits Soma through his mouth or the other openings of the body and the use of the *Sautrāmaṇi* ceremony after Soma-sacrifices are no doubt founded upon these two mantras..."[79] He adds further, "The *surā* is in general not employed in *śrauta*-practices; it is *laukika*, and not *vaidika* and everywhere in the worst repute possible. It is a strong drink. Mahidhara at VS xix.1 says that the Soma mixed with surā becomes strong (*asutaḥ surayā tīvrīkṛtaḥ*). Its preparation as described at KŚS xix.1.20-27 and by Mahidhara at VS xix.1 shows that it was a strong spiced brandy prepared from fermented grains and plants: cf. also Manu XI.95 = Gṛhyas. ii.16... The Brāhmaṇ who drinks the surā at the *Sautrāmaṇi* is hired to do so at ŚŚS XV.15.14; at ŚB XII.8.1.5, surā is designated as an unwholesome potation: *aśivā vā eṣa bhakṣo yat surā brāhmaṇasya*; therefore a rājanya or vaiśya is hired to drink it at KŚS xix.3.16... Especially strong is the condemnation of surā in the shāstras: i.e. at Manu XI.94 where it is called the dirty refuse of food..."[80]

Surā was the drink which Namucī gave to Indra. It prostrated him completely. Bloomfield has said that it was not Indra's 'tipple'. The wholesale condemnation by the later tradition probably means that it was not the tipple of the devas at all. The significance attributed to it in the Śrauta practices i.e. its being *laukika*, belonging to the folk-tradition and not *vaidika* i.e. not belonging to the Vedic, that is to say, the deva-tradition cannot be overlooked. Moreover, the contradiction between the name *surā* i.e. the drink of the gods (from *surā*, god) and its being not *vaidika* may also be noted. The Śrauta tradition may be the correct one and the name *surā* might very likely be concealing a secret change in the name itself, i.e. *surā* may be originally a drink of the asuras, *surā* being the form created by the omission of the initial 'a' to change the association with it. Incidentally, this may supply the necessary clue to the later use of the word *sura*, god. In fact, *sura* is derived from asura, by the omission of initial 'a' signifying negative in Sanskrit. Thus the name *surā* suggests the asura origins as does the hiring of a *rājanya* or a *vaiśya*. So may have been the sacrifice *Sautrāmaṇi* in which the foreign drink was used.

In AiBr. III.49, the devas are said to have taken shelter in the *agniṣṭoma* and the asuras in the *uktha*. It is explained by M. Haug as "Ukthya is a slight modification of agniṣṭoma sacrifice... Ukthya is an older name for *śastra* i.e. a recitation of one of the hotṛ priests at the time of the soma libations. Agniṣṭoma has twelve recitations and the

ukthya has fifteen. The first twelve recitations of the ukthya are the same as those of the agniṣṭoma, to these three are added, which are wanting in the agniṣṭoma."[81]

The identity of the first twelve recitations may indicate the older nucleus of the *Agniṣṭoma*. The association of the asuras with *uktha* may be suggestive of its older origin which might have been later modified by the devas to serve their own purpose.

Another source of information for the possible customs and rites are those passages in TS, TaiBr. and JB where different modes of identical rites are emphasized. The inevitable conclusion that is drawn is that the devas succeeded because they performed the rites in a manner exactly opposite to that of the asuras. These passages may be later creations for which there is no 'way of checking'. It is possible that the asuras observed certain rites and the devas created certain others on the basis of those of the asuras. The underlying principle may be the inversion of the asura rites. Such passages invariably state the mode of the asuran rite first followed by the modified form established by the devas. Amongst such passages may be cited TS 6.2.5.2-3; TaiBr. I.1.4. 4-7, II.2.4.1-2, JB I.124; 154 etc. Moreover, since the Vedic tradition, that is the tradition of the victors, maintains that they snatched away even the sacrifices from the asuras, their adversaries and since the victors themselves maintain it, there may be lurking behind all these rites and confessions the skeleton of truth.

13. Life of the Asuras

The Ṛgveda and the Brāhmaṇas do not supply much information about the life of the asuras on this earth which may be attributed to the fact that their preoccupation was with victory and the religious rites. The available material is scanty, vague, and clothed in ritualistic garb.

The devas were moving in carts (*cakramacara*) whereas the asuras were sitting in houses (*śālās*). The term *śālā* is used in later works on Indian architecture to signify the houses of common folk.[82] Maitrāyaṇī-saṁhitā (I.8.3) clearly characterises the asura-pottery as 'that made by potter, turned on the wheel', which tradition is reflected in subsequent works. The term *kulāla* itself does not occur in ṚV. TaiBr. II.2.9.5 associates the earthen vessel with the asuras. Chāndogapariśiṣṭa in its *Śrāddhatattva* enjoins that the *kapāla*, a cup, jar, dish especially used in the *puroḍāśa* offerings, should be handmade and not wheel-made as the wheel-made earthen pot is the *asura* pot, whereas the handmade dish etc. are said to be *daivika*.

asureṇa tu pātreṇa yatra dadyāt tilodakam |
pitarastatra nāśnanti daśavarṣāṇi pañca ca ||
kulālacakraghaṭitam āsuram mṛṇmayam smṛtam |
tadeva hastaghaṭitam sthālyādi daivikam bhavet ||[83]

"Wherever oblations are offered by the asura-vessel the ancestors do not eat it for five to ten years. That earthen vessel which is formed on the potter's wheel is known as the asura (vessel) and those dishes etc. which are handmade are known as *daivika* (of the devas)."

The injunction preventing the use of the vessel made on potter's wheel in the ritual bears testimony enough of the technique being of foreign origin which is confirmed by its attribution to the asuras. For whatever it is worth, a custom records in TaiBr. I.5.6.1 the mode of shaving of the asuras. In general the asuras did not see things from bottom upwards (*ūrdhvam pṛṣṭhebhyo*). First they cut the hair, then the moustache, then the side cuts. The devas did exactly opposite.

ŚB I.6.1.2-4 speaks of how the seasons obtained a share in the sacrifice from the devas. "1. Now the seasons were desirous to have a share in the sacrifice among the gods, and said, 'Let us share the sacrifice! Do not exclude us from the sacrifice! Let us have a share in the sacrifice!' 2. The gods, however, did not approve of this. The gods not approving, the seasons went to the asuras, the malignant, spiteful enemies of the gods. 3. Those (Asuras) then throve in such a manner that they (the gods) heard of it, for even while the foremost (of the Asuras) were still ploughing and sowing, those behind them were already engaged in reaping and threshing: indeed even without tilling, the plants ripened forthwith for them..."

Briefly, divesting the narrative of its ritual garb and its magical effect, the devas had not observed the right timings of the seasons, a matter of utmost importance in a country like India, for agricultural activities. Obviously the asuras were fully aware of this and made fullest use of it in agriculture with the result that on account of the fertile soil, they could get bumper crops with least effort. Thus when the devas were still nomads, moving about in carts, the asuras were settled agriculturists. The devas acquired knowledge of the seasons only later and probably from the asuras.

Just as the sacrifices are said to have belonged to the asuras and were later appropriated by the gods, in the same manner all *vanaspatis* i.e. the herbs belonged to the asuras and were later appropriated by the devas. It is stated in ŚB VI.6.3.2 the devas and the asuras, both sons of Prajāpati were contesting. Then all the herbs went to the asuras and only *udumbara*, ficus glomerata, did not leave the devas. Having con-

quered the asuras, the devas obtained all the herbs. In ŚB III.6.1.8-9, all the medicinal herbs are said to have deserted the devas, only *yava*, barley was with them. (Therefore) the name *yava* is derived from that which does not leave them. Both these narratives may indicate the ignorance of the flora of the new region to which the devas had come. They knew only the udumbara tree and had barley.

Information concerning the marriage customs can also be collected from the Smṛtīs and the Brāhmaṇas. Of the types of marriages discussed in the Yājñavalkyasmṛtī, a type called asura-*vivāha* is mentioned. It is characterised as follows:

asuro draviṇādānādgandharvaḥ samayānmithaḥ |
rākṣaso yuddhaharaṇātpaiśācaḥ kanyakāchalāt ||[84]

"The asura (marriage is characterised) by the payment of money (as dowry), gandharva by mutual vows, rākṣasa by the abduction during war and paiśāca by the torture of the girl." All these types of marriages were in vogue as may be gathered from the narratives in Mahābhārata and other works.

Manusmṛtī III.27-34 describes eight types of marriages practised in ancient days. The asura-*vivāha* probably reflecting the customs current amongst the asuras is described in greater details than the others mentioned in the above verse.

jñātibhyo draviṇaṃ datvā kanyāyai caiva śaktitaḥ |
kanyāpradānam svācchandyādāsuro dharma ucyate ||

"(The rite in which) having paid the relatives and also (having paid) the girl according to one's capacity, the daughter is given away as per one's own desire, is called the asura rite."

The marriage rites to be practised by the Brāhmaṇas and the devas (*daivam dharma*) are also described by Manu.[85]

ācchādya cārcayitvā ca śrutiśīlavate svayam |
āhuya dānaṃ kanyāyā brāhmo dharma prakīrtitaḥ ||
yajñe tu vitate samyagṛtvije karma kurvate |
alaṅkṛtya sutādānam daivan dharmam pracakṣate ||

"Having clad her and having honoured the bride and bridegroom and having invited himself (i.e. the bridegroom) (who is) endowed with knowledge and character (the bride's father) gives his daughter in marriage. This is called brāhma rite. He (the bride's father) offers sacrifices and performs the sacrifices at the correct time. Then having adorn-

ed (her) with ornaments, he gives his daughter in marriage. This is called the *daiva* (godly) rite."

It may be observed that Manu strictly forbids the asura and paiśāca types of marriages while sanctioning the other two obviously foreign customs viz. gandharva (of gandharvas) and rākṣasa (of rakṣas).

The Pitṛmedhanirupaṇa of the ŚB (XIII.8.1.1 ff) discusses the burial rites of the devas in details. Incidentally it throws some light on those of the asuras. "The four cornered, the devas and the asuras both sons of Prajāpati were competing in all the directions. The devas drove away the Asuras, the enemies, who were defeated from the world. Therefore, those children of the devas made square *smaśānas*. Thus these Asuras and the easterners (make) round (ones). They who drove these (Asuras) from the world, arrange them between the two directions east and south as between these two directions is the gate of the *pitṛloka* i.e. the world of the manes and causes them to enter the *pitṛloka*..."

ŚB adds elsewhere: "Now some bank up the (sepulchral mound) after covering up the side. The devas and the asuras both sons of Prajāpati were contesting in this world. Those devas drove away the inimical asuras from this world. Therefore the children of the devas make their sepulchres so as not to be separate (from the earth), whilst those of the asuras, the easterners and others [make their sepulchral (mounds)] so as to be separated (from the earth) either on a basin or on some such thing."[86]

Camū, basin, pot (in which Soma is poured) is explained by Eggeling in a footnote as "a shallow stone basin or trough either solid or consisting of masonry (bricks) in the manner of our stone-lined graves."

Chāndogyopaniṣad 8.8.5 lays down in no unclear terms the description of the burial rites of the asuras as well as the belief on which they were based: *tasmād apy adyeha adadānamaśraddadhānamayajamānam āhur asuro bateti | asurāṇām hyeṣopaniṣat | pretasya śariram bhikṣayā vasanenalaṁkāreṇeti saṁskurvanti | etena hyamum lokam jeṣyanto manyante ||* "Therefore that person who is today not giving gifts, not having faith, not sacrificing is called asura indeed! This is the secret doctrine of the asuras in as much as they try to embellish the body of the dead by food,[87] garments, and ornaments. They believe that they can conquer the next world by this."

The description of the religious beliefs of the asuras coincides with those of the dasyus as described in Ṛgveda and already cited above. This passage and others from the Brāhmaṇas give us some idea of the belief in the life after death and burial rites of the asuras.

These details of the life of the asuras are found in the Vedic literature.

14. Te devā asurair[88] vijītya suvargam lokamāyan

And ironically enough the next sentence of this *sāma* from the TaiBr. II.2.7.3 is: *te amuṣmin loke vyakṣuddhyan* / 'They felt extremely hungry in this world'. The phenomenon of hunger is more earthly than celestial. Taken literally, the term *suvarga loka* means the world of light, heaven, or paradise. But what the devas seem to have attained by defeating the asuras was the state of abundance resembling paradise which probably had nothing to do with the heaven.

The story of Viṣṇu's three steps celebrates this final victory of the devas: He traversed the three *lokas* in one step, the Vedas in the other, and the *vāc* (speech) in the third.

After this complete conquest and destruction started the campaign of vilification of the asuras. The destruction was so all-pervading represented by the steps of Viṣṇu that not a trace of the asura civilization was left behind. In fact, the word asura became a synonym for evil. First, the connotations of various terms connected with the asuras and all those who opposed the devas were given derogatory, contemptuous significance. Then the special attributes and qualities of the asuras came to signify subhuman, animal-like traits. The last stroke was the change of connotation of the term *māyā*, originally indicative of creative power, to illusory magical power. Curiously enough, this trait of the asuras is preserved in its original form in Avesta where special emphasis is laid on Ahura-Mazda's creative power.[89] The physical strength and powers of endurance became powers of evil.

The process is well reflected in a passage in ŚB IX.5.1.12-27: Now, then, the discussion of the *samiṣṭayajus* (oblations): "12. The gods and the Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, entered upon their father Prajāpati's inheritance, to wit, speech—truth and untruth, both truth and untruth: they both of them spake the truth, and they both spake untruth; and indeed, speaking alike, they were alike. 13. The gods relinquished untruth, and held fast to truth and the Asuras relinquished truth and held fast to untruth. 14. The truth which was in the Asuras beheld this, and said, 'Verily, the gods have relinquished untruth, and held fast to truth: well, then, I will go thither!' Thus it went over to the gods. 15. And the untruth which was in the gods beheld this and said, 'Verily the Asuras have relinquished truth and held fast to untruth: well, then, I will go thither!' Thus it went over to the Asuras. 16. The gods spake nothing but truth, and the Asuras nothing but untruth. And the gods, speaking the truth diligently, were very contemptible, and very

poor... 17. And the Asuras, speaking untruth diligently throve even as salt soil, and were very prosperous: whence he who speaks untruth diligently, thrives indeed, even as salt soil and becomes very prosperous; but in the end he assuredly comes to naught, for the Asuras indeed came to naught... 27 ...When they (the Asuras) had gone away they (the gods) spread the evening service and completed it; and by completing it they obtained that whole truth. Then the Asuras went down (lit. leapt down). Then the gods prevailed and the Asuras came to naught."

Were they really unable to understand the trend of events? They became the avowed enemies of the devas on account of their tough resistance against the inroads into their territory. This is why they were described as villains, forces of evil, of darkness. In MBh, Arjuna played the role of Indra and with Kṛṣṇa as adviser defeated many asuras. After that they are heard of as incarnations of evil in the symbolic stories of the forces of good and evil. They disappeared from the physical world completely, appearing on the conceptual plane representing the forces of darkness.

IV

1. Gandharva, the first born

THE other mythic beings mentioned in Ṛgveda and in later Vedic literature as also in the epics are the gandharvas, the yakṣas, the rakṣas and the piśācas. The apsaras, appearing along with the gandharvas, are said to be their wives. In mythology, the gandharvāpsaras belong to the world of the devas as their musicians. The yakṣas do not belong to the world of the devas or elsewhere. While the rakṣas, later called rākṣasas, are known as evil forces in the nature, the piśācas belong to the world of the dead. The symbolism as reflected in the associations of these mythic beings with the different cosmic planes and their place in the cosmology is suggestive of a definite scheme, based on the relationship the devas had with them in the times of Ṛgveda.

The criterion for gradation seems to have been based on whether these beings have resisted the advance of the devas to the *Suvarga—Svarga* or not. That the asuras put up tough resistance to the devas has been amply borne out. The rakṣas have fought alongside the asuras and so did probably the piśācas who are mentioned only once in the Ṛgveda. There are indications that the gandharvas have fought along with the asuras initially but later probably joined the devas. The gandharvas obtained the status of the divine musicians having made the gift of Soma to the devas. The yakṣas are not prominent in ṚV, but are probably referred to in the context of the Dāśarājña, on the opposite side of Indra's protégé, king Sudās. The single reference to piśāci appears in the context of conflict and destruction.

The etymologies of the names are doubtful and phenomenon of double meaning is present in some cases. These will be pointed out in proper places. Against this background, the associations with the gandharva are examined. The word gandharva appears in Ṛgveda, Atharvaveda, TS and the Brāhmaṇas. Like the term asura, gandharva is used as an epithet as in ṚV IX.86.36 where Soma is called *apāṃ gandharvaṃ divyaṃ*, the divine gandharva of waters; in TS 1.1.11.1, agni is called the gandharva Viśvāvasu; Vena who is the solar god is also called divya gandharva (in ṚV X.123.7) and agni, the 27 gandharvas.

The term gandharva is used both in singular and plural. As noted

by Macdonell, out of twenty occurrences of the term in ṚV, only three are in plural, and out of thirty-two occurrences in the AV half are in the plural.

The Gandharva (sing.) is almost always associated with *div* in ṚV. He is called the *divyo* Gandharva. He is also associated with *vāc*, asura and the solar bird as has been already seen in the discussion of the concept of Asura, the god. A complete hymn addressed to Gandharva is Atharvaveda II.2.

1. The heavenly Gandharva, who is lord of being, the only one to receive homage, to be praised among the clans, thee being such I ban with incantation, O heavenly god; homage be to thee; in the heaven is thy station.
2. Touching the worshipful, sun-skinned, depictor of the seizure of the gods—gracious shall be the Gandharva, who is lord of being, the only one to receive homage, very propitious.
3. He hath united himself with those irreproachable ones; even [in—Whitney] among the apsaras was the Gandharva; in the ocean is, they tell me, their seat, whence at once they (both) come and go.
4. O cloudy one, gleamer, starry one, ye that accompany the gandharva Viśvāvasu, to you there, O divine ones, homage do I pay.
5. They that are noisy, dusky, dice-loving, mind-confusing—to those apsaras that have the gandharvas for spouses, have I paid homage.[1]

The concept of gandharva that is reflected in this hymn addressed to him is that, he is associated with *div*, he is stationed in *div*, his seat is the abode of the gandharvas and apsaras. He is the lord of being, the sole lord of being. He is closely associated with sun, sun is his skin; he is the brightly gleaming, starry one. The gandharvas associate with the apsaras, who are described as noisy, dusky, dice-loving, mind-confusing.

In ṚV X.123, according to Geldner, Soma and the solar god are mystically identified in the gandharva.[2] AV II.1 runs parallel to ṚV X.123, both the hymns expressing the same thought in identical words with the exception that the Atharva-hymn does not refer to Soma and concerns itself mostly with the concept of Gandharva and searches for his abode in the human being, or in other words, for the Gandharva-element in the human beings. ṚV X.123 runs as follows:

1. This seer [Vena][3] drives with one [who is] pregnant with the variegated (bull), covered in light at the time of measuring of the space. In the union of the waters (and) the sun, the eloquent ones lick this with prayers as (the cows) their young one.

2. Out of the ocean, the seer [Vena] drives up the waves. The cloud born back of the beloved has appeared shining on the surface at the top-point of the sacrificial order [*ṛta*]. The decoying girls have cried for the common bed.
3. The many mothers of the calf from the same residence are there bellowing to the general (young one). The voices moving on the surface of the sacrificial order [*ṛta*] lick the sweet divine draft.
4. The eloquent one knowing its form, hankered (after it) because they agreed in the roar of the buffalo animal. Going by the right way [*ṛta*], they have ascended the Sindhu. The Gandharva had found the immortal names.
5. The young woman, the apsara, bears her lover in the highest heaven smiling to him. As a darling he goes into the womb[4] of the beloved. This seer [Vena] sits on the golden wing.
6. When they saw you as a bird flying to the heaven, perceiving with their hearts, the golden-winged messenger of Varuṇa, in the seat of Yama, the hastily flying one.
7. The gandharva had raised himself in the sky bearing his variegated weapons. He clothed himself in a fragrant garment good to look at like the sun and brought his dear name to appearance.
8. When the drop comes to the sea, looking into the entire extension with the eye of a vulture, there the sun, longed for his bright effulgence, has taken his beloved (names) in the third heaven.

The translation of AV II.1 may be as follows:

1. Vena saw that highest secret (place) where all the universe becomes one form only. The variegated one milked this. The decoying girls coming into existence and obtainers of light cried.
2. May the gandharva proclaim knowing the immortal abode, which is highest and secret. Whoever knows the three seats kept in secret, he is the father of the father.
3. He is one father, begetter, he is the relation, who knows the abodes of various beings. Who is the sole name-giver of the gods, to him all beings go to ask.
4. I went at once around heaven and earth; I approached the first born of the right order [*ṛta*], abiding in beings as speech in the speaker. He is the container (*dhāsyuḥ*). Is he not indeed agni?
5. I went around all beings, in order to see the stretched thread of the right order [*ṛta*] where the gods, having attained immortality, impelled themselves upon the same bed.

The three hymns including ṚV X.177 form a group. They deal with a single theme and are attempts to understand the mutual relation between the natural external universe, the cosmos signified by *ṛta* (cosmic order) and the human beings. In the case of Asura, the Asura's seat, his

creative power in the human being is seen in the speech which dwells in the mind. Gandharva, the solar god, the first born of the cosmic order (v. 4), is seen abiding in the human beings as speech in the speaker. This analogy 'speech in the speaker' takes us back to ṚV X.177. The interesting association of the gods Asura and Gandharva may be noted as also the conspicuous absence of the concept of Brahman, the be all and end all of later Indian philosophy.

The motifs common to the hymns are as follows: Vena figures prominently in both the hymns. In ṚV X.123, Veno Bhārgavaḥ is the author who addresses the hymn to Vena probably the solar bird, implying an identity between the two. In AV II.1, Vena is the author who has mastered the secret of the universe, known to Gandharva alone. Thus Vena was probably the solar bird, the Gandharva and also the seer who had mastered the secret of the reality signified in this case by the godhead called Gandharva. The Atharvaveda hymn is a clear statement of the experience.

ṚV X.123 opens with the description of sun-rise, in which the solar bird is said to be driving with the *pṛṣṇīgarbhā*. The same expression occurs in AV hymn also. Probably it refers to the concept of cow as the sky which was not unknown to the pre-Aryans. It is found in Egyptian mythology (see Chapter XII.6). Pṛṣṇī is the cow who bears in her womb the sun. This interpretation fits in the context of the Atharvavedic hymn also.

The phenomenon described in v. 1 of X.123 is clearly that of sunrise. The seers perform the prayers at this time. The sun rises high up and appears at the highest point of the cosmic order (*ṛta*). The decoying girls and the many mothers probably symbolise the rays arising from the common source and in the cosmic context referred to in the earlier *pāda*, the stages of the cosmic order which were conceived to be seven (see infra Chapter XII.2). In fact, the cosmic order is constantly referred to. The seers who were hankering after the knowledge of reality recognised the roar of the buffalo. Here the buffalo (*mahiṣa mṛga*) probably bears the same relation to Gandharva as the bull does to Asura, the solar deity. Traversing the cosmic order, they mounted or ascended the sea. Probably the following verses describe what they saw: The Gandharva had obtained the Immortal names, the Immortal Secret and he was the lover of Apsaras in the highest heaven and had entered the womb of his beloved. The seer Vena, desirous of traversing the same path (metaphorically) flies like the solar bird, the messenger of Varuṇa as the sun and obtains the vision of Gandharva in full glory. They in v. 6 probably refers to the ancient seers who also had the same experience. The drop has come to the sea. Vena had the experience of reality, the bright sun with his effulgence.

The Atharvaveda hymn II.1 is a direct expression of the same experience. Gandharva knows the highest secret place, the immortal abode. He is the father of the father. Gandharva is the first born of the cosmic order abiding in beings as speech in the speaker. AV II.1.5 is parallel to ṚV X.123.8, where the poet tries to discover the essence of the cosmos in the beings. The cosmic order was the common bed for the immortal gods. In general, the concept of Gandharva who was also a solar deity seems to have been parallel to that of Asura.

The identity of Gandharva with the sun is clearly stated in ṚV IX.85.12: "The gandharva has raised himself above the firmament revealing all his colours; his ray is shining in clear glow; he has illumined both the worlds, his mothers, (he) the pure one." As the sun, he is the first born of the world order.

The association of Gandharva with the sun explains the references to gandharva in the hymns addressed to the god Asura. In X.177.2 Gandharva says to the speech which is being carried by the solar bird in the mind, 'in the womb'. When considered in the context of AV II.1.4c, where the first born of the right order resides in the being like the speech in the speaker, it may mean that when the speech was carried in the mind by the bird, to her he reminded of (his) being inside the womb i.e. his residence in the (innermost) being. Probably as the speech represents the creative power of Asura carried by the bird within him, and is perceived by the seers as such, the creative power of Gandharva also exists in the inner being of the creatures. As such both speech and the creative power of Gandharva are probably meant to be identical. Speech may be the more concretized form of the power. In fact, the use of the simile of "like the speech in the speaker" is suggestive. It is as if Gandharva resides in the being in the form of the speech. This correlation between the creative power in the being and speech can explain the later preoccupation in Indian religious tradition with the harmony in body, speech and mind. Speech is the manifestation of the inner being and body is the instrument in this manifestation. As such X.177.2ab are to be treated on par with each other.

Indications are available that the concepts of Asura and Gandharva seem to have been similar and are also related to each other.

In fact ṚV X.177 is meant to unfold the mystery of the creative power of Asura, who is represented as a solar bird. Thus the hymn may be translated as follows:

1. The bird, is anointed by the creative power of Asura; the eloquent ones see by the heart, by the mind, the seers perceive (him) in the ocean and those masters search the place (i.e. source) of the light rays.

2. The bird carried the speech by the mind. To her the gandharva declared "in the womb". To her, the illuminating solar knowledge, the seers protect as the seat of Truth.
3. I saw the herdsman going to and fro on his way, without resting, he conceals himself in the waters which ran in the positive and negative directions and he moves to and fro in the creatures.

The Asura as the source of all creative energy is seen differently by different people. The speech is the essence of this creative energy which is inside every being as the essence of the first born of the world order. It shines brightly with the sun's rays i.e. the main source of the creative energy which the seers protect as the source of the world order of Truth. The third verse deals with the natural phenomenon of the sun and its recurrence. The essence of the sun, as Asura and Gandharva, moves amongst the creatures.

The abode of Gandharva and the Apsaras is said to be in the sea (in AV II.2.3) from where they come and go. In ṚV X.10.4, Yamī calls the gandharva in the water and the aqueous nymph (*gandharvo apsu apyā ca yoṣā*) the origin and highest blood relationship of herself and her twin brother Yama. In JB I.125-126 Triśīrṣa gandharva is said to be living in a *naunagara*, a floating city (lit. a ship city). In a mystic riddle in JB I.42-44, the apsaras are mentioned: "*kiṃ ṣaṣṭham iti| pañca nadīḥ puṣkariṇīḥ puṇḍarikinīr madhūdakās syandamānāḥ| tāsu nṛttagītam vīṇāghoṣo'psarasām gaṇāḥ surabhir gandho mahān ghoṣo abhūd iti|* What is sixth? A lotus pond of the five rivers with white lotus, and sweet water flowing in it. In it was going on dance and music, the sound of *vīṇā* (Indian lute) and the beavies of apsaras, the sweet smell and loud recitations." Varuṇa while solving this riddle says that all these were his world.[5] This probably gives an idea of the function of the apsaras, who were concerned with water ritually.

The parents of Yama and Yamī who are mentioned in *gandharvaḥ apsu apyā ca yoṣā* sound to be not the human parents but the parents of all creation, which is suggested by the word 'apsu'. Apsu has been interpreted as 'in the water' probably under the influence of the adjective *apyā*. But there seems to be no special reason for interpreting it as Gandharva staying in the water. The other interpretation may be obtained by treating *apsu* as the name of Gandharva which may be directly supported by the Babylonian myth of Apsu and Tiamat. The myth of Apsu and Tiamat is narrated as follows: "In the time when nothing which was called heaven existed above and when nothing below had as yet received the name of earth, Apsu [Sumerian Abzu], the ocean who first was their father and chaos Tiamat, who gave birth to them all, mingled their waters in one, reeds which were not united, rushes which bore no fruit."[6] Later when Tiamat becomes tyrannical, Marduk kills

her. Tiamat is depicted as dragon. Dragon Taimāta is mentioned in AV V.13.6 which is a hymn on the destruction of serpent-poison (*sarpaviṣanāśanam*). Taimāta is identified by Tilak with Tiamat[7] and etymologically Taimāta may be derived from Tiamat. This only serves to show that the concept of Tiamat was not unknown to the composers of AV.

As Apsu is the father of all creation so is Gandharva who is the first born of the world-order. He is the father and the begetter, the lord of creatures as stated in AV II.1.2. This may explain the association of Gandharva with fertility. He is invoked in the marriage hymn and the husband receives his wife from Gandharva along with Soma and agni. Apsaras are transformed into the local mother-goddesses Āsaras, seven in number. Gandharva in the singular may have indicated the godhead.

In ṚV VIII.77.5 Indra is said to "have pierced through the gandharva in the bottomless spaces, so that the brahmā (priest) may flourish". This juxtaposition of the gandharva and the *brahmā* is suggestive of a clash of interests. Brahmā is translated by Geldner as the high priest and the Sanskrit word *brahmā* may refer to the brahmā-priest. This may point to the gandharva being a special type of priest. Furthermore, the antecedents of the word gandharva may be traced. In Rāmāyaṇa (7.100.10-11) are defined the limits of the country of the gandharvas (*gandharva-viṣaya*). It is described as "the country on both sides of the Indus (*sindhorubhayataḥ pārśve deśaḥ*) which is protected by the gandharvas who are armed (which are also mentioned in ṚV X.123.7) and are well versed in the use of arms. They are three crores in number. Further they were subdued by Bharata's sons, Takṣa and Puṣkala, who ruled over Takṣaśīlā and Puṣkalāvatī, twin cities founded after the destruction of Gandharvanagara." Present Kandahar is the semitization of Gandhara and the Rāmāyaṇa also roughly points to this region in Afghanistan and also in Punjab. The people of Gandhāra are mentioned in ṚV I.126.7 on Geldner's authority: "Hold me nevertheless therein, do not believe that I have a few hair. I am all haired just like a sheep of Gāndhāris." These Gāndhāris are people of Gāndhāra according to Geldner and there seems to be no reason to reject this interpretation. If the ordinary folk of the country of Gāndhāra were called Gāndhāris or Gāndhāras (as in Ram. VII.100.10, 11 and 101.2 ff), who was the gandharva? Gandharva, as already shown, was first and foremost the godhead which was identical with the sun. The gandharva in the second place referred to the earthly representative of the heavenly god viz. his priest. The form gandharva reminds one of the similar names of priests mentioned in the ṚV viz. Navagvas (ṚV VII.22.2, V.45.7 etc.) and Daśagvas (ṚV II.34.12, III.39.5 etc.).

The gandharvas are mentioned thrice in ṚV III.38.6, IX. 113.3 and X.136.3. They seem to be connected with the making of Soma in IX.113.3. In III.38.6 the wind-haired gandharvas are said to be in the service of the two kings, Mitra and Varuṇa, appointed by Asura. This reference may be indicative of the long association of the gandharva-priests with the Asura-religion.

2. Hostility between the devas and gandharvāpsaras

ṚV does not explicitly refer to any conflict between the devas and gandharvas. Indications of conflict may be seen in two references. In ṚV VIII.77.5 Indra pierced through the gandharva in the bottomless spaces, so that the high-priest (*brahmā*) may flourish. The other reference to the enmity occurs in ṚV VIII.1.11: "When (the charioteer) whipped Etaśa of sun (and) the flying horses of Vāta, there the one rich in counsels (Indra) carried Kutsa, son of Arjuna. He waylaid the gandharva whom none yet had brought to fall." Sāyaṇa glosses that the gandharva refers to sun. Oldenberg thinks it refers to Śuṣṇa and Geldner points to Indra's travel with Sūrya in the Śuṣṇa-battle, although the verse does not refer to Śuṣṇa even indirectly, nor do the previous or following verses. Nowhere else is there an interchange between the epithets asura/dāsa and gandharva. So it seems unlikely that Śuṣṇa would be called gandharva. The problem must remain open until fresh evidence decides it one way or the other. As it stands, if gandharva is taken to be the chief of the gandharvas, then the verse may point to the victory of Indra over the gandharva who was, as the verse says, waylaid i.e. attacked when unsuspecting. Moreover, once again on the testimony of the verse, this rare feat was achieved by Indra as nobody else had been able to do it.

The first reference viz. ṚV VIII.77.5, which juxtaposes the gandharva and high priest (brahmā) would be meaningful only if gandharva means a priest of Gandharva the god, by killing whom Indra gave his office to the Brahmā-priest, the priest of the devas.

AV IV.37 a charm used for the destruction of worms (*kṛmināśanam*) provides further information about the possible means of destruction of the gandharvas as well as the other foes of the devas: 1. With your (assistance), Oh herb, in ancient days the Atharvans slew the rakṣas; with your (assistance) Kaśyapa slew and by you did Kaṇva and Agastya (slay). 2. By you have we expelled the gandharvas and apsaras. O Ajaśṛṅgi, drive the demon (rakṣas) and destroy all by your smell. 3. Let the apsaras go to the river, to the noisy current of water—Gulgulū, Pīlā, Naladi, Aukṣagandhī apsaras, go away. You have been recognised. 4. Where there are Aśvattha, Nyagrodha, the great trees with crests, there you retire. You have been recognised. 5. Where are your swings,

green and whitish, where cymbals and lutes sound together—thither go away. Apsaras you have been recognised. 6. Here the mighty one of the herbs has come; let the *ajaśṛṅgī*, *ārāṭakī*, *tīkṣṇaśṛṅgī* push out. 7. Of the dancing, crested gandharva, apsaras' lord, I split the testicles and cause to disappear his member. 8. Terrible are Indra's missiles, a hundred spears of iron; with them let him push out the oblation-eating, *avakā*-eating gandharvas. (avakā = a grassy plant growing in marshy land). 9. Terrible are Indra's missiles, a hundred spears of gold (copper ?); with them, let him push out the oblation-eating, *avakā*-eating gandharvas. 10. All *avakā*-eating Piśācas, scorching, lighting, the waters do thou slaughter and overpower. 11. As if a dog or as if an ape or a boy all hairy gandharva adopting a pleasing form unites with women. Him we destroy with the powerful Brahman (incantations). 12. Your wives verily are the apsaras; O Gandharvas, you are their husbands. Run away, O immortal ones. Do not be united with mortals.

Obviously the title of the hymn Kṛmināśanam is deceptive. It is not only meant for the destruction of worms but as the first verse explains it was used in the destruction of the human foes by the Atharvans, by Kaśyap, by Kaṇva, Agasti and so on. Ajaśṛṅgī has also killed the rakṣas who fought with the devas. vv 3-5 & 11 already voice the transformation of apsaras and gandharvas as mythic beings.[8] Indra killed the gandharvas and apsaras with his spears. Another piece of evidence of conflict between the devas and the asuras is found in the hymn AV II.2 addressed to Bhuvanaspati, where a discordant note is struck by the binding of the divya gandharva Bhuvanaspati who is tied by Brahman. This might well be an interpolation in an earlier hymn in praise of Bhuvanaspati as AV II.2 appears from its contents. The interpolation echoes the sentiments in ṚV VIII.77.5.

The hymn points out gandharvas and apsaras being collectively wives of gandharvas. Is this indicatory of a loose relationship? The later lawgivers have included a form of marriage called gāndharva-*vivāha* amongst the five permissible forms. It is described as follows:

icchayānyonyasaṁyogaḥ kanyāyāśca varasya ca |
gāndharvaḥ sa tu vijneyo maithunyaḥ kāmasaṁbhavaḥ ||

"The bride and the groom are united through mutual agreement. This marriage springing from love and consummated is known as gandharva." The conspicuous absence of any rites for the celebration of wedding seems to be the characteristic feature. Instead, the emphasis is on mutual agreement. Does this signify the custom amongst the gandharvas and the possible explanation of collective husbands and wives?

The conflict between the asuras and the devas centred round fort-

resses, cows, gold and glory which together constituted Svarga (i.e. Suvarga, a good state or class!). The conflict between the gandharvas and the devas was for Soma of which Indra was so excessively fond. Thus Soma as the king, the devas conquered the asuras.

3. Soma goes to the devas

Throughout the ṚV, the Soma is said to have been brought by the falcon, the eagle, the bird.[9] It may be observed that all the words vena, śyena, śakuna, suparṇa etc. indicating the bird have been used in the ṚV and later tradition as personal names. As for example, Vena, the author of X.123 is Veno Bhārgavaḥ; Śyena, that of ṚV X.188 Śyena Āgneya; Śakuna, as in MBh Śakunī brother of queen Gāndhari; also name of an Asura in Harivaṁśa.

For some unknown reason, Soma occupied an important place in the cult of Gandharva. During the preparations leading to the mystical experience signified as Gandharva, the seers were drinking the Soma draft. In IX.86.36 Soma is called the *apāṃ gandharvaṃ somaṃ* which may also indicate a relationship as intimate as identity between the two. This is supported by the Brāhmaṇa-narratives which are discussed below in which the gandharvas are depicted as the lawful masters of the secret of Soma. They are also called guardians of Soma. The narratives bring out two elements: One dealing with the original possession of Soma by the gandharvas and the other narrating how the gods acquired the Soma. It is plausible that Soma was originally brought by Varuṇa probably from the land of gandharvas, through the good offices of the seers whose totem was the Vena, Śyena or Śakuna, the eagle etc. and who had nothing to do with the devas. The devas obtained the Soma through other agents like *vāc*, speech. This is the significance of the two different versions of the same narratives.

This is explained in AiBr. III.25-26 as: 'The king Soma lived (once) in the other world (in heaven). The Gods and Ṛṣis deliberated: how might the king Soma (be induced) to come to us? They said, "Ye metres must bring back to us this king Soma". They consented. They transformed themselves into birds. That they transformed themselves into birds (suparṇa) and flew up, is called by the knowers of stories sauparṇam...'[10] The story of Kadru and Suparṇī narrated in TS 6.1.6.1-6 also appears in ŚB III.6.2.1-23 the gist of which is as follows: 'The Soma is in the heaven and the devas are on the earth. The devas want the Soma in order to sacrifice by it. They produce two illusions, Suparṇī and Kadru, of whom the former was *vāc*. They have a contest about their superiority in beauty and Kadru wins. She makes it a condition for Suparṇī's freedom to bring the Soma from the heaven, which Suparṇī brings in two cups.'[11]

In AiBr. I.27 it is narrated: 'The king Soma lived among the Gandharvas. The Gods and *Ṛṣis* deliberated as to how the king might be induced to return to them. Vāc (the goddess of speech) said, the Gandharvas lust after women. I (therefore) shall transform myself into a woman, and then you sell me to them (in exchange for Soma). The gods answered: Now, how may we live without thee? She said, sell me to them; if you should want me, I shall return to you. Thus they did. In the disguise of a big naked woman she was sold (by the gods to the gandharvas) in exchange for Soma...for Vāc...returned to the gods. Thence the mantras are to be repeated with a low voice. After Soma has been bought, Vāc is with the Gandharvas; but she returns as soon as the ceremony of the *agnipraṇayana* is performed.'[12] The narrative in ŚB 1II.2.4.1-7 runs parallel to this except that the gandharvas give the Soma in exchange for *vāc* and try to keep her by showing how good they were. They recite the Veda. The gods create the lute and sit singing to her. She returns to the gods.

In all these versions as well as in ṚV two elements seem to stand out: 1. The eagle's role in obtaining the Soma originally. 2. The association of *vāc*-woman in getting the Soma for the devas. Both these elements are intermingled in the ŚB III.6.2.1-23 where Suparṇı as the name signifies is connected with the eagle and is explained symbolically as *vāc*.

As it is, *vāc*-narrative emphasises upon *vāc* being a woman. Suparṇī and Kadru are also women, albeit phantoms. This becomes meaningful in the light of another narrative in ŚB II.9.3.17-23: "The reason why they go thither with the wives is this. 18. When the head of the sacrifice was struck off, its sap running entered the waters; those Gandharvas, soma-wardens watched it. 19. The gods then said, 'Those Gandharvas, surely, are a great danger to us here, how can we carry off the sap of the sacrifice to a place free from danger and injury?' 20. They said, 'Well, the Gandharvas are fond of women; let us go together with the wives! The Gandharvas, surely, will hanker after the wives, and we shall carry off that sap of the sacrifice to a place free from danger and injury.' 21. They went with the wives; the Gandharvas did indeed hanker after the wives, and they the gods carried off that sap of the sacrifice to a place free from danger and injury."[13]

This appears to be the correct explanation, which was later clothed, for obvious reasons, in the garb of *vāc* and so on.

In the Avesta, Haoma (i.e. Soma) is said to have grown "primarily on Haraiti (Elburz). There he offered sacrifice to Sraoša, Drvaspa and Mithra (YS x, 10; vii, 19; Yt ix.17; x, 88) and from that height holy

birds bore him everywhere to the Iskata Upairi-saena and the staro-sara mountains..."[14]

If this tradition is taken literally, it may indicate a very ancient origin of the haoma-soma cult. Soma was probably found growing wild in certain areas and was later spread elsewhere through the holy bird, to be identified with the divine Gandharva and Asura, which might indicate its existence already in certain areas.

The names of poets associated with the Soma-cult in ṚV X.123 are names of the birds known as eagle, falcon etc. which might corroborate the Avestan tradition. The bird-names may be indicative of the long association of the priestly families whose totem-symbol was the bird with the soma-cult.

It was thus not an armed struggle. The gandharvas were doped into parting with the divine draft. With this doping started once again the campaign of vilification in which they were shown to be possessing women.

4. The home of the gandharva and Soma

The Gandharva (sing.) is almost always associated with *div*, usually translated as heaven, sky. In ṚV, Viśvāvasu is called *divyo gandharvo*,[15] the gandharva of *div*. In Atharvaveda (II.2.1-5), *divya* Gandharva is praised as the lord of living beings. In ŚB V.1.1.16 *divya* gandharva Ketapū is invoked. The devas, as is indicated by their name, traced their origin to *div*, the heavenly region. Thus both the Gandharva by his association with *div* and the devas hailed from a common region, heavenly or otherwise. As already noted, the word deva could be used in the case of things terrestrial and of great excellence in ṚV times. Further the people called Gāndhāris are mentioned in ṚV. Probably, gandharva was their deity and the word was also used to indicate the priest of that deity. The country of gandharvas as described in Rāmāyaṇa (VII.100.10-11) was located on both the banks of the Indus. According to the inscriptions of Darius, Ga(n)dara is mentioned as one of the countries under his sway. Ga(n)dara is identified as the region of Kabul valley as far as Peshawar,[16] which nearly confirms the Rāmāyaṇa tradition. "Zimmer considers that they (i.e. Gāndhāris) were settled in Vedic times on the south bank of the Kubhā upto its mouth in the Indus and for some distance down the east side of the Indus itself."[17] Thus the eastern boundary of the Gāndhāra-deśa seems to be fairly well-known.

The Soma is almost invariably associated with *div*. He is called the mountain living bull who is being milked by the seers on the firma-

ment of heaven.[18] The Soma plant is said to be growing on the mountains, *parvatāvṛdh* (ṚV IX.46.1) and in AV III.21.10 mountains are said to be *somapṛṣṭhas*, soma-backed. Varuṇa (and not Indra) is said to be in heaven, *div*; in IX.61.10 the whole Soma plant (*andhas*) is said to have come from *div* and to have been brought by the eagle (ṚV V.45.9, IX.68.6, X.144.5). Soma, the intoxicating juice is said to be the child of heaven (ṚV IX.38.5). Soma flows with his stream to the dear places of heaven (IX.19.8). In IX.85.9 he is said to occupy *div*. Soma is also called Maujavata, a product of Mujavant (ṚV X.34.1). The location of this mountain is uncertain, though Hillebrandt and Zimmer would like to identify it with one of the lower hills of the southwest of Kashmir. Soma, the juice, is called *pītu*, the beverage, *mada*, intoxicating draught, *anna*, food. *Madhu*, honey or mead is especially applied to Soma. *Madhu* is the equivalent of Soma and is associated with *amṛta* as it is used in ṚV X.123.3, 4. In VS VI.34, Soma is used in close connection with the immortal consorts i.e. the water which is poured on the Soma and in ŚB IX.5.1.8, Soma is explicitly equated with *amṛta*, nectar: *tadyattadamṛtam somaḥ saḥ*, that which is this nectar is this Soma.

Thus the Soma drink is often referred to as the best milk/juice (*pīyūṣa*, which has obtained the meaning of nectar i.e. *amṛta* in later tradition) of *div* in several places in ṚV.[19] Soma is also said to have the quality of bestowing immortality—as is said in ṚV VIII.48.3, we drank the Soma (and) became immortal.[20] It is conceivable that the drink which is attributed this quality may be called after it. The Gandharva is said to guard the place of Soma in ṚV IX.83.4. Thus the gándharvas, Soma and the devas seem to come from a common region viz. *div*.

In the case of the gandharvas, there is little doubt that they occupied the Kabul valley and southern part; the western boundary of their kingdom might have extended further than can be proved now. It is also likely that the devas, while sharing the common region, did not live in the immediate vicinity of the gandharvas who had close contacts with the asuras, the dānavas and others indicated by various genealogies and names mentioned, e.g. Haṁsa in Harivaṁśa[21] is also a dānava and a son of Aṁṣṭā who is mother of gandharvas. Asurā appears to be a name of an apsara. Although this evidence may sound flimsy, their contacts and relations with Asuras and the others, the enemies of the devas, are amply borne out by their later transformation into mythic beings. The enmity is also reflected in some of the hymns from AV discussed above.

If the Avestan tradition in relation to Soma is considered, it might give a rough idea of the farthest extension of the region of *div*. According to Avestan tradition also, the Haoma grows chiefly on the mountains and primarily on Haraiti i.e. Elburz to the south of Caspian sea.

From the heights of Haraiti, holy birds bore him everywhere. This myth happens to coincide, as already shown, with Soma in ṚV and might thus be an older one inherited by the devas from the gandharvas. The mention of the messenger of Varuṇa in ṚV X.123.6 brings in the asuras. This may be taken to be the original home of Soma from where it spread through an unknown agency in the hoary past. In fact, the attribution to the bird may be a suggestion of the remote antiquity of this myth and the use of Soma. This may be of help in establishing the original home of the gandharvas. The locality of Elburz may have been the place from where the gandharvas hailed. The gandharvas appear to have discovered first the secret of soma.

Thus *div* might have extended from the banks of Indus to the boundary of Iran upto the Elburz mountains (?), and probably to the north of Merv, if Merv is equivalent of Meru which is considered in later Hindu tradition as the centre of the world, that is the world of the devas. The conflict between the devas and the asuras symbolically depicted in later mythology as the churning of the ocean in which Meru serves as the churning rod, the king of serpents, viz. Śeṣa as the rope, *kūrma*, tortoise, steadies the rod and the devas deprive the asuras of the *Amṛta* and other things which are churned out. Meru and *Amṛta* are the two important symbols. Meru seems to be at a superficial consideration same as Merv and *Amṛta* is the Soma which the devas snatched away from the gandharvas.

In ŚB XIII.4.3.7, 8, the gandharvas are said to be the subjects of Varuṇa. They are described as having beauteous form and Atharvan was said to be their Veda. The apsaras are described as the subjects of Soma Vaiṣṇava and Aṅgiras, their Veda. This tradition may appear to be partially valid when considered in the light of the fact that the Atharvaveda is also known as *atharvāṅgirasau* and that it was admitted into the Vedic fold comparatively late. Scholars have also recognised portions of greater antiquity in AV than ṚV itself. The reasons for associating the apsaras with Soma Vaiṣṇava are not quite clear.

V

1. Yakṣas

YAKṢA now means a semi-divine yet a fearful superhuman being. Monier-Williams describes the later concept of Yakṣa as: "A class of semi-divine beings...though generally regarded as beings of a benevolent and inoffensive disposition...they are occasionally classed with Piśācas and other malignant spirits and sometimes said to cause demoniacal possessions."[1]

Yakṣu as a clan name occurs in the ṚV. Many of the names of the tribes or clans referred to in ṚV end in u as e.g. Pūru,[3] Śigru,[8] Śimyu,[4] and appear to be loanwords into Sanskrit. Probably these are the names of the tribes or communities as they were known or as they called themselves. As such they were borrowed in Sanskrit. Yakṣa might represent the later sanskritized form of Yakṣu, a non-Sanskrit word. A similar example may be found in the case of *mleccha*, the Pali equivalent of which is *milakkhu* which appears to be yet another original name. The u-ending has been changed into Sanskrit to a. Thus it is likely that the later term yakṣa was in its original form Yakṣu.

The earliest reference to Yakṣus as people is found in ṚV VII.18.9. They are referred to as *yaksavaḥ*, the Yakṣus, who along with the Ajas and the Śigrus paid tribute to Indra with the heads of their horses. The term also occurs in singular as an epithet in ṚV VII.18.6: "Turvaśa, Yakṣu was the foresacrifice [*puroḍāś*]. The Matsyas who were seated on the wealth like the fish in water, the Bhṛgus and the Druhyus afforded willing following. The friend has helped him thoroughly, who was his friend amongst the two opponents." The verse forms a part of the description of the battle between the ten kings. There is little doubt that Yakṣu is used as an epithet of Turvaśa who is described as *puroḍāś* and translated by Geldner as foresacrifice. In the context of the preceding and following verses, this translation of *puroḍāś* appears unsuitable for obvious reason that the context is not of the sacrifice and hence the literal translation of *puroḍāś* suggested above i.e. one who was previously a *dāś*, mariner seems to be justified. Yakṣu Turvaśa was a *dāś*, i.e. a mariner and may have been the chief of Yakṣus, the people referred to in v. 19 of the same hymn. The Yakṣus fought against Sudās on the side of the ten kings who were routed by Sudās aided by Indra and his

priest Vasiṣṭha. This enmity is reflected in their being turned into mythic beings in later tradition.[4a]

Yakṣa occurs in a few other places in ṚV and AV where it does not seem to refer to people. Moreover the later form *yakṣa* is available in these cases.

ṚV V.70.4 (a hymn addressed to Mitra and Varuṇa): 'O you of inconceivable insight, may we not experience the secret [*heimlichkeit, yakṣa*] of anybody in our person neither in progeny (children) nor in relatives."

In the previous verse Rudra is invoked to extend his protection in order to be able to compete bodily with the dasyus and the verse under discussion invokes protection from the *yakṣas* of anybody. No direct evidence is available to identify these *yakṣas* with those of the *yakṣas* of the dasyus. But it appears that the *yakṣa* from whom the invocateur seeks.protection belonged to somebody else.

ṚV VII.61.5 reads as: "O you bulls, both of you are unfailing. Those strokes of your selves in which one neither sees a sign (*citra*) nor wonder [*wunder, yakṣa*] follow the dishonesties of man. To you two, secrets have not remained unknown." (This hymn too is addressed to Mitrāvaruṇa.)

ṚV IV.3.13: "Do not go to the secret [*heimlichkeit, yakṣa*] of a dishonourable person or of a deceiving inmate or a friend. Do not plague on us the offence of a dishonest brother, O Agni; may we not taste fully the impact of roguish friend."

ṚV X.88.13: "The seers, worthy of sacrifice and the gods created this agni Vaiśvānara, the ageless, the oldest, never failing, the wandering star, the strong and the great (high) seer of secrets (*geheimnisses, yakṣasya*)."

Agni is called the great seer of *yakṣa* which is meant complimentarily, an extraordinary capacity to see the *yakṣa*.

ṚV I.190.4: "His call penetrates to heaven, to earth. As a racer, (draws the wagon), may the clever one who bears the secret (*geheimniss, yakṣa*), draw (?) (the gods ?), when these (arrows) of Bṛhaspatī just like the arrows for the wild go to the heavenly (gods) changing just like serpents."

The verse seems to be difficult and it is not clear to which incident the invocateur is alluding to, although it is clear that he is praying to *yakṣabhṛt viceta*, the *yakṣa*-carrying clever one,—reminiscent of *patañgo vācam manasā bibharti* (ṚV X.177.2)—to protect or sustain him (*yaṁsat*, subj. of √*yama*, to sustain, to hold, support), thereby acknowledging his superior powers.[6]

Yakṣa has been interpreted by Sāyaṇa on the basis of its derivation from √*yaj*, to sacrifice, worship etc. Geldner has tried to make out a strong case for *yakṣa*, *geheimniss*, *heimlish*, secret, *wunder*, wonder, as reflected in his translations.

The dictionary meaning of √*yakṣ* ("perhaps a Desd. of a √*yah*, from which *yahu* and *yahva*") is to be quick, speed on.[7] *Yahu* means restless, swift, mighty, strong and is paraphrased by Sāyaṇa as *mahat* and *yahva*, restless, swift, active (applied to Indra, Agni and Soma in ṚV). Thus perhaps the usage of *yakṣa* in ṚV VII.61.5 may be interpreted as follows: "O you bulls, both of you are unfailing. Those strokes of yours in which one neither sees anything spectacular (or special) (*citra*) nor (anything) speedy (quick, hasty) follow dishonesties of man etc." By saying that the punishments meted out by Mitra and Varuṇa are not speedy, the poet means to compliment them for their balanced treatment of the offender.

2. Yakṣa in Buddhism

The Pali equivalent of *yakṣa* is *yakkha* and has the following shades of meanings: 1. *Yakkha* is derived by Pali commentators from √*yaj*, to sacrifice. Thus *yakkha* means a being to whom a sacrifice is given. *yajanti tattha balin upaharantī ti yakkha* (Vimānavatthu aṭṭhakathā), sacrificed (means) there the offerings are placed before, that are the *yakkhas*. 2. *Yakkhas* as *rukkha-devatas*, tree-spirits, J. III.309, 345; Petavatthu I.9; II.9; Petavatthu aṭṭhakathā 5. 3. *Yakkhas* as *bhumma-devā*, earthly deities, Petavatthu Aṭṭhakathā 45, 55. 4. The cult of *yakkhas* seems to originate from the woods (thus in trees, Petavatthu II.9; IV.3) and secondarily from the legends of seafaring merchants. 5. Exceptionally the term *yakkha* is used as a philosophical term denoting the individual soul.[8]

The usage of *yakṣa* in ṚV seems to be threefold: 1. As a status which agni can perceive (ṚV X.88.13); 2. *Yakṣa*, derived from √*yah*, quick, speedy as in ṚV VII.61.5; 3. In the rest of the cases *yakṣa* seems to be used in a different sense. As is clear from the context in ṚV IV.3.13 and V.70.4, it seems to be intimately related to something that is associated with the body but is not the body. There are indications that it can leave one body and enter another. This transferable quality points to spirit or something like the spirit, a kind of essence of the whole personality, the moving force behind it, which was believed to migrate from one body to another.

This last sense of the term yakṣa is confirmed by its usage in Kenopaniṣad 3-4 where the story of the greatness of gods is narrated. The point to be noted is that the background of the story, although not

stated explicitly, is the victory of the devas over the asuras. Especially the three, agni, Vāyu and Indra whose might was challenged by the magnificence of the Brahmā were the three mighty agents in the conquest of the asuras. The story runs as follows: "[3] Brahmā (lit. expansion, evolution, growth) had obtained the victory for the devas. The devas felt exalted in the victory of Brahmā. They thought, 'this is our victory, this is our grandeur'. (1) He came to know this. He appeared before them. They did not know what this *yakṣa* (active thing) was. (2) They said to Agni, 'O *jātavedas* (knowing all created beings) please know this. What is this *yakṣa* (powerful, active thing)?' He agreed. (3) It went near him (agni) and asked him, 'Who are you?' 'I am agni or I am *jātavedas*.' (4) 'Then what is your essence (*vīryam*)?' 'I burn all that is here on the earth.' (5) To this he laid down grass. 'Burn this.' He set upon it with all his speed but could not burn it. There itself he turned away. He was not able to understand (know) what this *yakṣa* was. (6) Then (they) said to Vāyu. 'Vāyu, know this what this *yakṣa* is;' he agreed. (7) It ran near (him). To him (Vāyu) it asked, 'Who are you?' 'I am Vāyu', he replied, 'I am Mātariśvan.' (8) 'Then what is your essence?' 'Whatever is on this earth, all this I can carry off.' (9) To him, it set down grass. 'Carry this off.' He rushed to it with all his speed. He was not able to carry it off. He turned away there itself. He was not able to know what this *yakṣa* is. (10) Then (they) said to Indra, 'O Maghavan, know what this *yakṣa* is.' He agreed. It ran (to him), and concealed (itself) from him. (11) He came upon a woman beauteous (called) Umā Haimavatī in the same space. To her he asked 'What is this *yakṣa*?' (12) [4] She said '*Brahman*. You [should exult brahman for this victory.' Then they knew *brahman* (1) Thenceforth those gods who were better than others i.e. Those agni, Vāyu, Indra, touched his neighbourhood. They first knew *Brahman* (2)."

A short passage in Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad (5.4.1) may serve as a comment on this: 'Whoever knows this mahad *yakṣa*, the first born, the Truth, the Brahma, he conquers these worlds.'

The Kenopaniṣad passage identifies *yakṣa* with Brahmā and the association with Brahmā may point to its being the primal force.

This usage of *yakṣa* may be distinguished from the meaning of *yakkha* in Pali, e.g. *ettāvatā yakkhassa suddhi*, this manner of purification of consciousness. The Pali usage as is testified by the Mahāniddesa 282 where *yakkha* means *satta* (being), *nara* (man), *puggala* (individuality), *manussa* (human being) points to an individualised (narrower) concept. That is to say, *yakkha* as a Buddhist philosophical concept denotes the individual essence, whereas Brahmā denotes the divine essence and source from which all created things emanate, the absolute, etc. Thus apparently for unknown reasons, an inversion in meaning has taken place.

Yakṣa, as is later shown, is closely connected with the later concept of *Brahman*. The usage in ṚV is extremely illusive and obscure. Its use in the Kenopaniṣad to indicate the magnificent might of *Brahman*, surpassing even the strength of the devas, shows that it was probably a byword for expressing this sense. To the extent the concept of *yakṣa* was clearly formed, it may probably be treated as the prototype of the concept of *Brahman*. But this must remain an open question as only the association of *Brahman* with *yakṣa* cannot be the basis of such a conclusion.

3. Yakṣa in Atharvaveda

AV also refers to *Yakṣa*. AV VIII.9 is a beautiful hymn addressed to *Virāṭ*, the primal principle of the world, the Illustrious, the Majestic, the Magnificent, the Sovereign. Only verses in which *yakṣa* is referred to are cited below:

VIII.9.8. Following whose removal sacrifices are removed; (by whose) stay, (sacrifices also) stay; in whose impelling rule, the *yakṣa* stirs. That, O seers, is Virāṭ in the highest firmament.

VIII.9.25. What (now) is the ox? Who is the lone *ṛṣi* (seer)? What is the abode? What are the blessings? *Yakṣa* on the earth (is) onefold, one fixed time (season), (out of these) who is he?

VIII.9.26. The one ox (is) one, the *ṛṣi* (is) one, one abode, the blessing (given) once, *yakṣa* on the earth (is) onefold, one fixed time—(all these are) not surpassed.

Yakṣa is the part of the universe ruled by Virāṭ. It was probably borrowed into Sanskrit. The latter possesses the power to stir it. It is unitary and unsurpassable.

Further AV X.2 is devoted to the manifestation of Brahman and the three verses 31-33 discussed below appear towards the end of this hymn. The simile of *pura* in these verses may provide a clue to the understanding of the concept of yakṣa.

31. Eight-wheeled, nine-doored (is) the impregnable fortress of the devas; in it is a golden casket, the *svarga*, covered with light.
32. In that golden casket, with three spokes and with three supports, is that *yakṣa*, endowed with self. That is known by the knowers of *Brahman*.
33. That golden one is brightly shining surrounded with glory; the golden fortress, never defeated, the *Brahmā* entered.

Metaphorically body is called the fortress (*pūḥ*). But this metaphor seems to have been used dexterously to interweave the philosophical elements and those of *devāsura* conflict. First comes the mention of an impregnable fortress reminiscent of fortresses broken by Indra. Then the mention of a *hiraṇyaya koṣa*, a golden casket equated with *svarga* i.e. *suvarga*, where stays *yakṣa* endowed with self. Thirdly, Brahmā enters this fortress which is described as *aparājitām*, unconquered, reminiscent of the direction of north-east which was called *aparājitā* as the devas did not suffer defeat only in this direction.

The hymn is devoted to the creator of human body, the last few verses describe body as the seat of yakṣa and *Brahman* both. The two are associated with each other as in the Kenopaniṣad. The metaphor of the fortress and other details are reminiscent of the *devāsura* conflict. Also in the Kenopaniṣad passage discussed above, the context is that of the *devāsura* struggle. There it forms the background. The inflated pride of the devas in their victory was levelled by the experience of *yakṣa-Brahman*. The metaphor of the fortress with the yakṣa in its innermost chamber rather smacks of a concept born of advanced stage in civilization. The concept displays familiarity with a sort of temple structure in which a central or inner chamber is the seat of the sacred.

A verse similar to AV X.2.32 is found in AV X.8.43: The nine-doored lotus is covered with three *guṇas*. In that is the *yakṣa* endowed with self, which the knowers of *Brahman* know.

Yakṣa is described in AV X.7.38-39: The great *yakṣa* at the centre of the world is extended in penance (*tapasi krāntam*) on the surface of the water. In him rest whatever devas there are just like the trunk of a tree with the branches round about. To whom the devas offer the *bali* with hands, feet, speech, eyes and ears. That support which is perfectly measured immeasurable, please say who he is?

In the next hymn (AV X.8.15) viz. Jyeṣṭhabrahmavarṇanam, once again *yakṣa* is mentioned, this time as a god of the rulers: "In the distance it dwells with the full one, in the distance is abandoned by the deficient one—the great monster (*yakṣa*) in the midst of existence; to it the kingdom bearers bear tribute."[9] The *yakṣa* was offered sacrifice by the rulers. This is a testimony of its having been an important godhead on whose favour depended the prosperity of the people.

In AV XI.2.24 speaks of yakṣa in the Kenopaniṣadic vein: Oh Paśupatī, by you have been placed the animals in the forest, deers in the jungle, and birds, swans, eagles and hawks. Your *yakṣa* is inside the water. For your glory, the divine waters flow. In AV XI.6.10, *yakṣa* appears in its plural form: We address the sky, the asterisms, the earth,

the *yakṣas*, the mountains, the oceans, rivers and the pools on the earth.[10] May they free us from distress.

From the above citations the concept of *yakṣa* may be summarised as follows: Of the two aspects of *yakṣa*, one appears to be the supreme force of the universe. It is unitary. It is possessed of self, the knowers of *Brahman* know that *yakṣa* possessed self, it is the centre of the world; it lies on the surface of the water. It is the refuge of the gods. It is like the trunk of a tree and the gods are like the branches. Just as the branches cannot exist without the trunk of the tree, the gods owe their existence to the *yakṣa*. It is the creator of the gods, their *raison d'être*. The rulers offer him sacrifice for bounty as the great *yakṣa* dwells with the full one (*pūraṇa*). In extolling Virāṭ, (even) *yakṣa* is said to be stirred by her impelling rule, which is by itself a confession of great power. Paśupatī Rudra's *yakṣa* resides in the water. Probably this is the other and secondary aspect of *yakṣa* concept. It appear in its later form when *yakṣas* (pl.) are associated with earthly things as individual essences, but still not as evil beings. The unitary concept gives way to the multiple aspect.

Primarily *yakṣa* may have been a godhead, a supreme deity which was conceived to be the essence of the universe as well as of the individual. In fact that it occurs in the hymns and passages connected with Brahman and used in the descriptions of Brahman may point to its being an older concept than that of Brahman. It is not unlikely that when the concept of Brahman was still evolving, the concept of *yakṣa* was already formed and was probably commonly known. In the hymn addressed to Virāṭ, the knowledge of *yakṣa* seems to have been taken for granted when the seer says that even *yakṣa* is stirred by the impelling rule of Virāṭ. The concept of *yakṣa* bears traces of a strongly monistic bias.

Yakṣa was also associated with water. It lay extended on the surface of the water in penance and the *yakṣa* of Paśupatī Rudra dwelt in water. The divine waters paid tribute to it. Similar tradition is available in Buddhism where a cult of *yakkhas* seems to originate from the legends of seafaring merchants. The association of the seafaring merchants may take us back to Yakṣu Turvaśa who is described in ṚV as *puroḍāś* i.e. former mariner. That the *yakṣa* lay stretched on the waters may be explained by its being worshipped by the mariners or sea-going merchants for the protection of themselves and their cargoes. This aspect of the concept of *yakṣa* might possiby be the oldest. It is likely that the Yakṣus as a clan derived their name from that of their god who was probably called *yakṣa*. Thus the reference to Yakṣu Turvaśa being a former mariner assumes special significance.

Its association with water and with creation is reminiscent of the

concept of Apsu and Gandharva. Future research may possibly reveal single original source for all these.

If Yakṣa was a supreme divinity, the living force behind all the creation, the description of the structure available in AV X.2.31-33 might have more than mere metaphorical significance. Certain elements in the verses are reminiscent of the *devāsura* conflict.

The earlier verses in the hymn (AV X.2) are devoted to the relation between man and *Brahman* and especially the greatness of *Brahman*. If the metaphor of the body as the abode of spirit is to be applied to vv. 31-33, the sudden jump from ordinary *pura* to *devānām pūḥ ayodhyā* with nine doors and eight *cakras* (wheels) is not quite clear. Towards the end brahmā priest enters this golden casket, which remains incomprehensible, especially if the verses are interpreted metaphorically. The metaphor of a fortress with nine doors and eight *cakras* may refer to body only if the cakras are understood as the eight psychic centres of the Kuṇḍalinī or Nāḍi yoga not directly mentioned in the hymn. However, if the verses are interpreted in the light of the *devāsura* conflict, the entrance of the *brahmā*-priest into the fortress may symbolise the victory of the devas and entry into what might have been a shrine of *yakṣa*. Another point to be noted is the juxtaposition of *yakṣa-ātmanvat* and *brahmavido viduḥ* i.e. the knowers of *Brahman* know that which is *yakṣam ātmanvat*. Once again the *Brahman* is explained in terms of *yakṣa*, thereby suggesting the conceptual identity of the two.

4. The Yakṣus and their god Yakṣa

The concept of *yakkha* in Buddhist tradition has been already stated above. The cultic aspect is practically the same, only the philosophical concept has changed.

The Buddhist tradition also treats *yakkhas* as supernatural beings. The traits attributed to them are of mixed nature, which have led to their being considered as something not of this world, e.g. their appearance is striking as a result of former good *kamma* (deeds). They are said to be *kāmakamī*, enjoying all kinds of luxuries. However, on account of bad *kamma*, they possess odd characteristics. They are shy, and are afraid of palmyra leaf and iron. Their eyes are red and they neither wink nor cast a shadow. Their abode is the self-created palace anywhere in the air, in trees etc. They are mostly *ākāsaṭṭha* (living in the sky) but some of them, like the abode of Āḷavaka, are *bhumaṭṭha* (located on the ground) and is described as being fortified. Sometimes whole cities—e.g. Aḷakanandā stand under the protection of or are inhabited by Yakkhas.[11]

This description contains two distinct elements which, when put

side by side, create a figure which cannot be of this world and therefore it inhabits the world of fancy and myth.

1. Their appearance is striking; they enjoy all kinds of luxuries, are shy, afraid of iron, and live in fortified abodes, in cities and protect them.
2. Their eyes are red, they do not wink, nor cast a shadow (which are non-human traits). Their abode is self-created which is anywhere in the air, trees etc. These abodes are mostly suspended in air.

The first description may be of the people and the second may be that of a deity, a popular, degenerate version of the concept of Yakṣa, the god. Together these two elements were certainly unrecognisable and led to the belief that the yakṣas/yakkhas are supernatural beings endowed with superhuman powers. People who called themselves Yakṣas seemingly lived in the Himalayan ranges in the north-eastern direction. A language called Yākhā of the Kirānti family is recorded by W.W. Hunter in A.D. 1868.[12]

The prosperity and luxurious living associated with the yakṣas in Buddhism is also found in the Epic tradition. Buddhist art abounds in the depictions of the yakṣas. The yakṣī has become a byword for a beautiful female standing in an exotic posture, bewitching all the onlookers, and the yakṣas are depicted as big-bellied laughing creatures. Their king Kubera is the guardian of treasures. In Chinese mythology too he is a presiding deity of prosperity. He is depicted as sitting cross-legged, with bulging belly and laughing gaily.

In Sanskrit and Pali, the term *yakṣa* is derived from $\sqrt{yaj}$ which meaning may be justified on the basis of the offerings made to yakṣa. This leaves the later depictions of yakṣa unexplained. These might have a longer tradition behind them than may be suspected. Considering the two traits of the yakṣas mentioned above, it seems possible that the word *yakṣa* may be derived from $\sqrt{jakṣ}$, which is a reduplication of $\sqrt{has}$, to laugh, j/y being interchangeable. In fact a tradition recorded in MBh calls yakṣas and rakṣas as brothers who separated from each other on account of some difference. The rākṣasas lived on the Gandhamādana but later went to Laṅkā.[13] As will be seen the rakṣas fought with the devas and were defeated. The yakṣas were also defeated but reconciled themselves, after paying tribute to the supremacy of the devas. Their gaiety and light-hearted luxury loving nature probably made the reconciliation easier.

The Mahāmāyurī Vidyārājñī, a Buddhist Tantric work,[14] contains a list of yakṣas with their respective abodes. The localities mentioned are scattered all over the North, East and West India. The mention of localities may not refer to the communities of yakṣas flourishing in

these areas. It may only mean that Yakṣa worship was current in these areas. Their spread over an area may not be due to their being numerous but as the divinty, the yakṣa represented the Essence of that spot. The yakṣa of a spot is invoked not to seek protection merely, as in Buddhism, but to propitiate him as the essence (of a place).

The association of Yakṣas with Buddhist shrines is explained in Buddhist literature in the form of a conversation between the Buddha and the yakṣa king Vessavaṇa. The king assures the Buddha that although he and his subjects did not practise the code of conduct preached by the Buddha, they would happily protect the bhikkhus going to forests for meditation. This may be a story invented to serve the purpose, the real reason of the association may be traced back to the belief in the yakṣa as the essence of the spot.

The yakṣa became a degenerate cult of trees probably because of the free borrowal from the yakṣa concept to form the brahman concept. The remnants formed into a vegetational cult mostly associated with the spirits living in trees whereas originally yakṣa was the Primal Force behind everything.

Thus have the Yakṣus changed into yakṣas. The people worshipping a god were submerged into it and thus came into existence mythic beings who were numerous because people were numerous and were endowed with superhuman powers of the divinity.

VI

1. Rakṣas

In later mythology rākṣasa (from rakṣas) is an evil or malignant being. In ṚV itself *rakṣas* is anything to be guarded against or warded off, harm, injury, damage. √*rakṣ* in ṚV means to guard, protect, watch, take care of, save, preserve. Even in ṚV there are hymns addressed to agni in which the invoker has sought protection from the rakṣas. In AV, √*rakṣ* is used in the sense of to guard against, to ward off, keep away, prevent, frustrate, injure.

There are over fifty references to rakṣas in the ṚV from the ealirest stratum, both in the singular and plural. No rakṣas is mentioned by name nor is there any reference to the physiognomy. No fortresses (*puras*) are associated with any of the rakṣas.

Not much evidence about the identity of their being a tribe or clan is available except in Pāṇini. In his Aṣṭādhyāyi V.3.117 while illustrating a rule about affixing *ā*, Pāṇini gives a list of names indicating warrior clans. In these names appears the name rakṣas. According to the rule the term rākṣasa indicated one belongirg to the warrior clan. The clans named could not have been different than the descendants of rakṣas of ṚV. In ṚV VII.104.24, man/male (pūmāṅsaṃ) and woman/female (*striyam*) *yātudhānas* are mentioned.

The signs of the struggle between the devas and the rakṣas are abundantly scattered over the whole of ṚV. The rakṣas by their valour created terror in the minds of the devas. In practically all the hymns in which the rakṣas are mentioned, their destruction is prayed for. Agni, Indra and Soma are the three agents through whom they are sought to be destroyed. Agni is often called *rakṣoghna*, *rakṣohā* (ṚV X.87). Indra obtained the epithets *rakṣohan*, *rakṣas*-killer (I.129.11 etc.), *hantā rakṣasaḥ* (1oc. cit.), *rakṣoghna* (VII.104), *rakṣohā*. Soma is adored for having killed the rakṣas (VII.104, IX.37.1,3, IX.67.20).

The so-called mythopoeic traits associated with rakṣas in the ṚV are that they are magicians (*yātudhānas*) who can assume any form at will, that thay are cannibals, especially eaters of raw flesh both human and animal and thirdly, that they are devotees of idols (*mūradevāḥ*, as

translated by Geldner) or *mūḍhadevāḥ*, having foolish, idiotic gods as glossed by Sāyaṇa.

2. Yātudhāna

Yātudhāna, treated as an equivalent of *yātu*, meaning witchcraft, sorcery, is used as an equivalent for an evil being, rakṣas. In the *padapāṭha* of ṚV, *yātudhāna* is written as *yātu'dhāna* signifying two components, *yātu* and *dhāna*. *Yātu* is used as such. Monier-Williams has also recorded another meaning, 'going against, attack (?)', deriving it from √*yā*, to go against etc.[1] This also yields similar interpretation as the one suggested below. *Yātu* might be a nominal derivation from causal of √*yat*, to strive, meaning to cause to strive, impel, fight. *Dhāna* may be derived from √*dhā*, to exhibit, to show etc. Thus *yātu* may mean an impelled attack or fight (impelled by somebody) and *yātudhāna*, a show of such fights. The game of baiting on animals who are made to fight with each other is an ancient form of entertainment which was known all over the world till recently. Cock-fights, bull-fights, gladiatorial shows and modern horse racing, all probably belong to this category of entertainment. *Yātudhāna* is used as an alternative for rakṣas indicating the popularity of the game amongst the rakṣas. This interpretation is supported by a comment of Sāyaṇa on TMB i.6.7 where *devānām yātuḥ* is explained as *yātayitā, pravartayitā*, instigator of.

This interpretation of *yātu* may perhaps account for the appearance of the names of various birds and animals in ṚV VII.104.22: "O Indra, destroy the impellers (instigators) of owls, small owls, dogs, *cakrawakas* (Geldner), falcons, vultures and kill the rakṣas just like the grinding stone the corn." A reference to the rakṣas becoming birds in Ṛgveda[2] *vayo ye bhūtvī patayanti naktabhir*, i.e. those who becoming birds fly about, goes against this interpretation. However, it appears that had the verse referred to the rakṣas becoming birds i.e. assuming the forms of birds one might expect a reference in general to birds and animals as both are included. The nocturnal birds have been thought of as rakṣas, the expression being meant metaphorically.

In ŚB I.1.2.4, the rakṣas is said to roam about in the air 'rootless and unfettered'. These two adjectives 'rootless and unfettered' (*amūlam ...parichchinnam*) probably provide the clue to the interpretation of *vayo*. The manner of the movement of the rakṣas was completely unfettered by any natural surroundings, and they moved about freely without seemingly supported by anything that they appeared to function like birds without any root or fetters. The use of the verb '*patayanti*' fly about (or move swiftly) and the mention of birds in v. 22 precipitated it and thus the rakṣas were attributed the ability of transforming themselves at will into different forms. As is clear from ṚV VII.104.24 *yātudhānas* were human beings.

The belief that the rakṣas were cannibals is probably based on ṚV X.87.16 where it is said about them: *yaḥ pauruṣeyeṇa kraviṣā samaṅkte, yo aśvyena paśunā yātudhānaḥ*, 'he who devours (feeds on) the raw human flesh, and he, the magician (feeds on) (that of) the horse and cattle'.

Krūra and *kravis* may be related as in the case of *sthūra, sthavira*[3] and may mean pitiless, harsh, ferocious, fierce etc. and *pauruṣeya* may mean manly action. Thus *pauruṣeyeṇa kraviṣā samaṅkte* might mean he who adorns or honours (i.e. gains prestige) with ferocious manly deeds, he who (delights in) *yātudhāna* i.e. animal fights with number of horses and cattle. The interpretation appears to be belaboured but in ṚV X.87 the emphasis seems on showing that the *yātudhānas* i.e. rakṣas were cruel, wild creatures. The practices reflected in the animal and bird fights, if the interpretation of *yātudhāna* is correct, are also not mild.

The term *mūradevāḥ* might also be indicative of the same trait. *Mūradevāḥ* occurs only thrice in the ṚV. Besides *mūradevāḥ, mūra* and *amūra* both occur, almost always side by side.[4] All the three words are obscure, with uncertain derivation.

In all the three cases, the term *mūradevāḥ* is associated with the rakṣas. In ṚV VII.104.24 it is said, "With broken necks may the *mūradevas* sink down." In X.87.2, agni is asked to lick the *mūradevas* with his tongue and in X.87.14, is asked to crush the *mūradevas* with the brightest flame. Geldner translates *mūradevāḥ* as idol worshippers or devotees of idols, etc. No satisfactory explanation can be offered for the term. However, it does not seem impossible that *mūra* and *mura* are probably identical. ṚV has retained long-vowelled form whereas classical Sanskrit has retained the short vowel, which might point to the foreign origin of the term. A similar case is *mūru* and *muru* which in both forms is name of a country. It is a variant of *mura* (MBh 2.579) or *maru*. If *mūru* is identical with *mura*, it might have to be treated as the name of a people and their god. In later tradition *Mura* is the name of the daitya slain by Krishna. Murā was also the name of the wife of Nanda, whose son Chandragupta founded the Maurya dynasty. The possibility of *mūra* being later *mura* is further strengthened by the non-Aryan associations of both. Murā was supposed to have been a *dāsī*, a maid. If *mūra* (*mura*) is derived from √*mṛ*, (from its pass. *mūryate*) crush, break, kill, destroy, then *mūra* may mean 'by whom (others) are crushed'. This sense, although extremely doubtful, seems to fit in with the traits attributed to the rakṣas. Their god was either destroyed by the Aryans or encouraged, destruction, probably a distortion of a word which originally might have had a completely different sense. As it happened, in the case of the god Asura who possessed

creative power, which also in the course of time became a power to create illusion, *māyā*, in the same manner, *mūra*, as it seems, might have been the name of a god, the meaning of the word being lost.

Thus all the mythopoeic traits are doubtful and seem to be distortions of some practices with which the devas were not familiar and which on account of their being the practices of enemies, became further unpopular amongst the devas.

3. The conflict of the devas and the rakṣas

Innumerable references to the enmity between the devas and the rakṣas and the ultimate destruction of the latter are strewn over the Vedic literature from the earliest stratum of ṚV. Besides Indra, intoxicated with Soma-draft, liberal use of fire seems to have played an important part in the destruction of the rakṣas. That is the reason why agni has been called *rakṣohā*, the destroyer of *rakṣas*. ṚV VII.104 provides ample insight into how Indra might have killed the rakṣas. As is said in vv. 17 ff:

"17. (The sorceress) who appears at night time as an owl concealing herself behind a deceptive form, let her sink into endless depth. The pressing stones shall kill the rakṣas with their noise.
18. Divide yourself, O Maruts, in the residences of people, seek, hold fast, smash the rakṣas[5] who transformed into birds fly at night time. Or who practise dishonesties in the divine sacrifice.
19. Thunder the stone from heaven [*div*], O Indra, O rich in gifts, Soma intoxicated one, sharpen thoroughly, from before, from behind, from below and from above. Kill the darkmen with rock.
20. These fly about as *wer(e)* wolf ...[6]
21. Indra was the annihilator of the wicked spirits who disturb the sacrifice, who persecute. Śakra breaks out loose on the rakṣas just as an axe on the tree, breaking them like earthen ware...
24. O Indra kill the manly magician [*yātudhāna*] and his wife who boasts of her magic craft;[7] with broken necks should the idolators sink down. May they not see the sun-rising, Indra and Soma! Hurl the rocks after the wicked spirits [*rakṣas*], the hurling stones at the magicians [*yātumadbhyaḥ*]."

In ṚV X.87, the worshipper invokes agni as rakṣas-killer (*rakṣohā*):

"1. I sprinkle over the rakṣas killer, the victorious one. I seek the greatest help from the friend; may agni make himself poignant, after he is kindled with definite intentions and preserve us day and night from injury.

2. You, the iron-toothed, contact, when kindled the magicians [*yātudhānas*] with your flame, O Jātavedas! Wrap them up with your tongue, the worshippers of idols [*mūradevāḥ*]. Surround the flesh eaters and put them into your jaw.
3. Like the ferocious beast of prey, tuck in your two fangs, O you double-toothed one, sharpening the lower and the upper! And move in the space about, O king; with your fangs catch up the magicians.
4. Burnishing with your arrows with the sacrificial prayers, O Agni, stroking the tips of the arrows at our words (as though) on the sharpening stone, pierce with these (arrows) the hearts of magicians [*yātudhānas*], break down their arms backwards.
5. Agni, cut open the skin of the magicians [*yātudhānas*]. Let the ferocious thunder-stone kill him with its heat. Break, Jātavedas, their limbs. The flesh-greedy beast of prey may scatter cut-off pieces.
6. Whenever you see him standing or going, Agni Jātavedas, or flying on the ways in the air, there attack him, as a protection, shooting (him) with sharp arrows.
7. And make contact with the magician by your freely contacting spear, O Jātavedas. Kill him down, Agni, flaming out. The carcass-eating, multi-coloured vulture will eat him.
8. Here known (to) you, O Agni, which is it, who is the magician [*yātudhāno*] which does this. Envelop him with the burning wood, deliver him to the eye of the ruler's look..."

As has been shown above, the devas made ample use of fire in the destruction of the asuras and others.

The other Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas also refer to the conflict of the devas and the rakṣas. It is a common theme in the Taittirīya Saṁhitā and the Brāhmaṇas that the rakṣas destroy the sacrifice of the gods. As has been seen above, the metaphor of sacrifice was constructed on the basis of the life led by the devas on the small patch of land given to them by the asuras, on which they constructed a small temporary shade to keep their carts and cattle, and lived there. From there they, especially Viṣṇu, made excursions into asura-territories and hit upon the strategy. Agni was, of course, a part of this strategy. The disturbances caused by the asuras and rakṣaṣ in the daily life of the devas on the patch of land, or the resistance put up by the asuras and the rakṣas to the encroachments upon the Asura territory, were later summarised into the stock phrase of the disturbances in sacrifices, *yajñam rakṣāṁsi jighaṁsanti*,[8] the rakṣas were killing the sacrifice; or *rakṣāṁsi yajñaṁ hanyuḥ*,[9] the rakṣas killed the sacrifice. According to ŚB the rakṣas fought alongside the asuras. The prayers to agni, Indra, and Soma to destroy them, amply bear out that the devas were harassed by the rakṣas.

TS contains mantras recited in the course of the sacrifice. For

example, *pratyūṣṭaṃ rakṣaḥ pratyūṣṭaṃ arātayaḥ*, scorched are the rakṣas, scorched are the arātis;[10] *avadhūtam rakṣo'vadhūtā arātayo* shaken (expelled) are the rakṣas, expelled are the arātis (TS 1.8.5.1; 6.1). Another mantra depicts probably what the devas might have actually said on one such occasion: *parilikhitam rakṣah parilikhitā arātayā idaṃ ahaṃ rakṣaso grīvā api kṛntāmi yo'smān dveṣṭi yañ ca vayan dviṣmaḥ|* The rakṣas is rounded in a circle; the arātis are rounded in a circle. I am cutting the neck of this rakṣas who hates us and whom we hate. This is his neck... (TS 1.2.5.1; 1.3.1.1). Or *nirdagdhāṃ rakṣo nirdagdhā arātayo*, burnt is the rakṣas, burnt are the arātis (TS. 1.1.7.1 etc.).

As has been seen already, the throwing of the *aṣṭākapāla* cake into fire symbolises the burning of the asuras and dāsas. TS 2.2.2.2-3: To agni the destroyer of rakṣas, offer the *puroḍāśaṣṭākapāla* which they will accompany. To agni the killer of rakṣas, he (i.e. *yajamāna*) approaches with agni's share. He (agni) alone can kill the rakṣas. At night he should offer (the sacrifice). At night the rakṣas are driven (by agni). By driving these, they are killed...

AiBr. I.30 narrates how king Soma was saved when he was intercepted by the rakṣas. "When the king Soma had been carried once (to the place of Uttarā Vedi), the Asuras and Rākṣasas sought to kill the king between the place called sadas and the two havirdhānas. Agni saved him, by assuming an illusory form (*māyayā*)[11] as is said, in the words of the Mantra, purastādeti *māyayā* i.e. he walks before him by assuming an illusory form. In this way agni saved Soma.[12]

In TaiBr.1.7.1.4-5, it is said: Prajāpati produced the sacrifice. Having produced that, the rakṣas were killed. That Prajāpati created deities from himself and through them drove the rakṣas from all the quarters for which these five offerings are made. This *yajamāna* (the sacrificer) drives away the rakṣas from the directions. The rakṣas are confused, the rakṣas are scorched. The rakṣas burn. Svāhā to agni the rakṣas-killer.

In destroying rākṣasas, the herbs Ajaśṛṅgī (AV IV.37.1) and Apāmārgā (AV IV.19.3) were also used, although it is difficult to imagine the manner of doing this.

Not many details of the life of the rakṣas are available, except a type of marriage which is called *rākṣasa*-vidhī by the lawgivers. This type of marriage is permissible to the followers of vaidika religion.

hatvā chitvā ca bhitvā ca krośantiṃ gṛhāt|
prasahya kanyāharaṇaṃ rakṣaso vidhīrucyate||[13]

"Having killed, cut and smashed (the family), the girl is taken away

forcibly from her house, crying and shouting, this is called the rākṣasa vidhī."

Like all other opponents of the devas, the rakṣas did not escape vilification and in fact suffered from it most. Their name which might have originally indicated protection came to mean injury, harm; to later tradition, the rākṣasa was a creature who indulged in wickedness for its own sake, was terrible and demoniacal.

VII

Piśācas

PIŚĀCA in the mythology signifies a creature of the subhuman world, a ghoul, thriving on the flesh of the dead bodies.

In ṚV, piśācī (a female of piśāca) is mentioned once in I.133.5:

piśaṅgabhṛṣṭimambhṛṇam piśācimindra saṁ mṛṇa|
sarvaṁ rakṣo ni barhaya||

"O Indra, kill the reddish-yellow (*piśaṅga*) topped (*bhṛṣṭi* ?), roaring (*ambhṛṇaṃ*) piśācī. Destroy all the rakṣas."

The wording is extremely obscure, but the enmity between the piśācī and the devas is unmistakable in the prayer to Indra to kill her.

However, Atharvaveda abounds in references to the piśācas. AV IV.36 is addressed to Satyaujā agni:

4. I overpower the piśācas with power; I take to myself their property; I slay all the abusers; let my design be successful...
6. I am the vexer of the piśācas, as a tiger of them that have kine; like dogs on seeing a lion, they do not find a hiding place.
7. I cannot [bear] with piśācas, nor with thieves, nor with savages; the piśācas disappear from that village which I enter.
8. Whatever village this formidable power of mine enters, from that the piśācas disappear, (there) they devise not evil.[1]

Once again the motif is the same as before: just as the rākṣasas were killed by agni, in the same way, in this hymn agni pursues the piśācas out of the villages, drives them away from their homes and dispossesses them of their belongings. There is practically no mythopoeic construction in the description. Paippalāda Saṁhitā of AV has retained clear indications of this: II.62.1-5

ye piśācā imām vidyām ākūtīṃ mohayantu naḥ|
teṣām tvam agne nāśaya varca [sa ci]ttamatho prajām||
nāśayāgne piśācānāṃ varcasa cittamatho prajām|...

"These piśācas confuse (*mohayanti* ? tempt) us (in) this knowledge of intention. You, O agni, destroy them with your vigour... O agni, destroy the piśācas... You, O agni, burn all the flesh-eating piśācas with your flame." Further in Paippalāda AV XIII.9.3, it is said "O you Agni, Jātavedas, you, learned; by this fire, strong by oblations, make this piśāca shine bright so that his enclosure falls down (?). Pierce thou into his eyes, pierce into his heart, bore into his tongue, destroy his teeth; whatsoever piśāca hath devoured of him, that one, O agni, youngest [god], do thou crush back."[2] In AV IV.37.10, the Ajaśṛṅgī is asked to kill all the piśācas.

The Cātanas and the Kṣayaṇās in the Atharvaveda are a testimony of the impression left behind by the conflict of the devas and the piśācas.

In later tradition, the word piśāca is derived as *piśam* (*piśitam māṁsam*) *atti saḥ piśācaḥ*. The word *piś* or *piśa* is derived from √*piś*, to hew out, carve, prepare (esp. meat), make ready, adorn oneself or to form, fashion, mould. If the term is taken in the latter sense, *piśāca* might mean one who fashions, moulds or forms. *Piśaṅga* means reddish, brown, or yellow i.e. primarily it refers to colour.[3]

The term may have been used in both senses: In VS XXX.8, the *bali* offered to the piśācas is one who does wicker-work. Mahidhara explains this as: 'To the piśācas (may be offered) the wicker-workers, cane-workers or those who make bamboo-pots.' As shown above, the decisive principle in the offering is the correspondence based on similarity between the devatā, in this case piśāca, and the offering, an evidence which might possibly support the interpretation offered above. The piśācas were moulders, or fashioners of some kind, although it is difficult to guess the medium and nature of their craft. However, the later mythopoeic trait about their intense fondness for flesh, might point to their being carvers or sculptors, whose art of carving in wood (?) or stone (?) was twisted into flesh-carving or preparing the flesh, thus making them inhabitants of the nether-world. It may be profitable to compare the term *peśa* derived from √*piś*, an architect, a carver with the proposed interpretation of piśāca. *Peśa* seems to have retained the original significance of the term whereas the meaning of piśāca has been distorted. (This becomes a possibility when looked at in the light of the Gandhara school of sculpture which flourished in the north west of the Indian subcontinent, although it is doubtful if the traditions if any could survive in the adverse circumstances to which the piśācas must have been condemned after the defeat. The reasons for associating this region with the piśācas are explained below.)

Pāṇini in his *gaṇapāṭha* on Aṣṭādhyāyi V.3.117 mentions piśācas as one of the warrior clans.

In MBh, VII.2083, the piśācas are mentioned along with the Daradas who lived in the north west of the Indian subcontinent. Paiśācī language is recorded in the linguistic survey of India, the earliest available description of this language being in Hemacandra's grammar of Prākṛta languages. The evidence of MBh is discussed in detail by Grierson in his lengthy article on 'Paiśāci, Piśācas and Modern Piśāca'.[4] In fact in recent times the Paiśāci-speaking tribes have, on account of the associations with the term piśāca, *objected* to this name and prefer to identify themselves as the Dards. The Dard tribes may still have some memories of their past. Inayat-ur-Rahman observes that their legends still retain traces of their once having been fire-worshippers and of a belief in fire god.[5] There is no evidence to show that piśācas were fire-worshippers. It is not unlikely that along with the asuras, who had this belief, they might also have worshipped a god closely associated with fire. Inayat-ur-Rahman notes wood carving work on furniture, doors, windows, beams, pillars of houses and old mosques which may represent an ancient tradition. The derivation of the name piśāca may find confirmation in this tradition. Grierson has shown how the evidence favours the piśācas being considered actual human beings. However, the evidence for cannibalism is not enough. It seems probable that the rakṣas and the piśācas both partook raw flesh which is not cannibalism. Moreover, the raw flesh dishes are considered delicacies amongst certain peoples even at the present day, as for example, the dish called Osushi amongst the Japanese. The dish is nothing but rice rapped in thin slices of raw fish-meat.

The piśācas, in the MBh tradition, are said to be Khaśas, the sons of Kaśyapa by his wife Krodhā. The Khaśas are identified with present Khasias located in the north-eastern Himalayan ranges, but as is pointed out by Grierson they might have been spread over the region from Hindukush, Karakoram to the Himalayas i.e. from the north-western region to the north and north-east.[6] The piśācas are also mentioned along with the yakṣas. The present Khasias are short-statured people with Mongoloid features. This may help in interpreting the word piśāca as yellow complexioned.[7]

The lawgivers mention a type of marriage called *piśāca* and is described as follows:

suptām pramattām vā raho yatropagacchati|
sa pāpiṣṭho vivāhānām paiśācaś cāṣṭamo'dhamaḥ||[8]

"When (the woman) is sleeping, or intoxicated (she is) approached secretly, it is paiśāca, the eighth type amongst marriages, most sinful and lowest."

Thus even as it stands, the earliest tradition contains ample evidence about the true identity of what came to be known later as the mythic beings. They were the peoples who inhabited northern India and as they resisted the advancing Aryan hordes, they came to be branded as the permanent enemies of the Aryans. The Aryans vanquished them through foul means, taking advantage of the jealousies amongst these peoples. The Aryans destroyed the cities and gradually a whole civilization. The struggle did not end there. It went on for centuries until each powerful Asura was vanquished by some Aryan hero or other.

These people became the symbols of Evil when the Aryans created a religion out of the events to commemorate their victory. That is how later generations knew them. The Aryans as victors reserved for themselves the title of gods representing the good. The conflict between the Aryans and the non-Aryans was enacted through the sacrifices. Ironically enough, later generations of the Brahmanic priests forgot all about the victory and kept on performing the empty sacrifices with wooden swords, grass, chariots, etc.

VIII

Pañca-carṣaṇī

As has been seen above, probably the word *śunī* indicated the origin of Saramā which may be traced to a community known after Śunā, the goddess of ploughshare. Moreover, the prefix deva of devaśunī might be indicatory of her originally non-devic birth and the subsequent elevation in her status on account of the services rendered by her against the Paṇis.

Here are examined the use and implications of two other terms viz. *carṣaṇī* and *pañcajanāḥ*, as they are directly related to the asuras and others whom the devas vanquished.

The term carṣaṇī is of doubtful meaning. Carṣaṇī is translated by Geldner as people or land, in a general sense. However, there are indications that the term referred to the foes of Indra and the devas and that Indra and agni are extolled for having excelled over them. The later stratum of ṚV drops some hints of a struggle between the carṣaṇīs and Indra, as for example I.109.6. Indra and agni are said to have excelled all the carṣaṇīs in the battle cry. In I.55.1, Indra is called fearful, strong, who caused pain to carṣaṇīs. As a finale to the Vṛtra-episode, Indra is said to rule over the carṣaṇīs (I.32.15). Indra and agnī are called the bulls of carṣaṇīs and Indra is also said to govern them (IV.20.8, VI.36.1 etc.). In IX.101.9, Soma is asked to give riches in order that the worshipper became victor and enable him to dominate over the pañcacarṣaṇīs.

Mitra and Varuṇa both are said to be supporters of carṣaṇīs. Mitra is said to be watching the tillers (*kṛṣṭis*) with unblinking eyes (ṚV III.59.1). He is the supporter of the carṣaṇīs and the five peoples obeyed him (loc. cit. 6, 8) which might probably refer to the same people. Varuṇa is the king who supports the carṣaṇī (ṚV IV.1.2). That there might be some relationship between the carṣaṇīs and the five peoples is also suggested by the carṣaṇīs being five, as in ṚV V.86.2, Indra and agni are sacrificed to, they who rule over the five carṣaṇīs. In ṚV VII.15.2, it is said: Agni who rules over the five carṣaṇīs, established himself in every house etc. and in yet another late reference *pavamāna* Soma is said to rule over the pañcacarṣaṇī. The five peoples (pañca-janāḥ)

anointed agni bringing sacrifice to him. Thus both pañcajanas and pañcacarṣaṇīs were fire-worshippers. The latter were settled in houses, and were not nomads.

It seems that Indra had clashed with the carṣaṇīs. His victory over them was somehow related to the defeat of Vṛtra. The relation of Varuṇa with the five carṣaṇīs as that of Mitra with the five peoples supports the possibility of the carṣaṇīs being really the subjects of the two rulers Mitra and Varuṇa. On the basis of this their opposition to Indra becomes comprehensible. Thus probably carṣaṇī was the appellation of the people who were jointly ruled by Varuṇa and Mitra. Indra assumed the rulership after killing Vṛtra. This is probably emphasized through frequent references to Indra's dominion over the carṣaṇīs. This becomes doubly significant if carṣaṇī is taken to mean cultivators. The emphasis also serves to distinguish between the cultivators and the nomads. As has been already seen Varuṇa was invited to be the joint ruler of Indra's kingdom after the asuras became powerless (*nirmāyā*). In this context, the interpretation of carṣaṇī suggested by Monier-Williams as cultivating, active, agile, swift, cultivators (opposed to nomads)[1] gains credibility as it is apparent that the five peoples referred to as carṣaṇī were not nomads. In fact, they were a settled population of cultivators as referred to in ṚV III.59.1. These five people were really the Asuras, Rakṣas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas and Piśācas. The other combinations in the MBh and Purāṇas only reflect the confusion created by the desire of the devas to be included in this list! That the expressions pañcacarṣaṇī, or pañcajanāḥ[2] refers to these five people may be supported through a practice of festival, called Holi, which is celebrated throughout India. Despite the efforts of modern social reformers like B.G. Tilak, G.G. Agarkar and others in Maharashtra to put an end to various ugly practices associated with the festival the fervour continues unabated.

On the evening of the full moon day of the month of Fālgun (the 12th month of the Indian lunar calendar) small fires are lit in front of the houses and in the lanes in the evening usually composed of cakes of cow-dung, some firewood and other articles collected from the surrounding households. The fire is lighted and worshipped with all the usual rituals, after which the men folk and children circumambulate the fire making noises made by beating the mouth with the back of hand. Despite the condemnation of the coarse elements, the festival continues to be popular, the persistence of which may be attributed to a deep rooted tradition. A significant element is the expression for the noises made on the occasion, which is *pāñcajanya karaṇe* (Marathi), to make those (noises) pertaining to or originating in five peoples. Its synonym *śaṅkha karaṇe* means screaming, shouting literally analogous to the practice of blowing the conch during worship and warfare. The three important elements of the festival viz. fire, the noises of the five peoples and its

persistence despite its coarseness point to its having some special significance. It is not impossible that the victory of the Aryans over the five non-Aryan peoples is sought to be perpetuated symbolically every year through this festival. The indecent noises probably correspond to the shrieks and cries of the asuras, rakṣas and others during the holocausts in which they were burnt to death. Thus the festival was probably imposed as a mark of the Aryan victory over the non-Aryan population.

The generous use of agni in the defeat of the asuras by the devas has already been discussed and this is what is referred to in the conquest by agni of the carṣaṇīs. There are indications that carṣaṇī referred to the five peoples who were already settled in the Indus valley and that the term tries to distinguish this settled agricultural population from the way of life of the Aryans, who were themselves nomads. This distinction is rightly pointed out by Monier-Williams.

Besides this, there are several terms especially connected with agriculture some of which are now recognised as loan-words into Sanskrit from Muṇḍāri and Dravidian languages. Amongst such borrowals from Muṇḍāri may be counted *lāṅgala*,[3] plough, *sīra* (=*sīla* ?),[4] plough, *khala*, threshing floor, *ulūkhala*,[5] mortar, *musala*,[6] pestle, *phāla*,[7] ploughshare. Amongst the borrowings from Dravidian languages may be cited *matya*[8] (TS), harrow, roller and *matikṛ*, to harrow, roll, make even by rolling[9] coined from *maḍike* (Kannada), a kind of harrow or rake. Terms of unrecognised origin but of non-Sanskritic appearance are also to be noted: *kīnāśa* and *kīnāra*,[10] farmer, *pharvara*,[11] field, *karīṣa*, manure, *titau*,[12] sieve for purifying corn, *sater*,[13] husk, chaff, *sadaka*,[14] unhusked grain (both the latter appearing in lexicons), *tsāru*,[15] a handle of the plough, *tusa*,[16] chaff husk, (of late appearance). There are several other terms associated with agriculture of doubtful meaning like *sṛṇī*,[17] sickle (?), *stega*,[18] ploughshare (?). The very fact that so many terms intimately connected with agriculture are of non-Sanskritic origin may suggest that the process of agriculture itself was unknown to the Aryans. And it is but natural that the people when confronted with an activity as complex as agriculture, requiring conscious knowledge of the various successive processes involved in an operation, use of implements and observation of natural events like the onset of monsoon in a tropical country etc. would learn it from others who were already well-versed in it. In the process they may also add a new vocabulary which is already used in the language of their predecessors.

In fact as has been already noted above (Chapter III.13), the asuras are attributed agricultural operations in ŚB and also the knowledge of the seasons, trees, herbs, grains etc. The knowledge of seasons especially of monsoon in India must have played a vital role in agriculture. Apparently the devas appropriated all the details necessary for

agricultural operations starting with the knowledge of seasons, which is expressed in the ritual language as the seasons who were with the asuras came to the side of the devas when they were promised a share in sacrificial offerings.

ṚV IV.57 and X.101 and AV 3.17 are devoted to agriculture. The first is supposed to be addressed to Kṣetrapati, the deity of field, second is uncertain and the third prays in general for success in agriculture and prosperity. There are some common verses[19] and also many obscure words, suggestive of its ancient origin. The appearance of some of the verses in AV, only means that both the Ṛgvedic and the Atharvavedic hymns were probably composed out of older material. The late entry of Atharvaveda in the vedic literature coupled with the nature of the material may point to non-Aryan origin of the material which was compiled into Atharvaveda after due alterations.

In fact, although it is possible to collect detailed information about the various stages in agriculture from Ṛgveda, it may not necessarily mean that these were a part of Aryan way of life, on their arrival in India. The linguistic borrowals suggest an opposite trend.

IX

1. The fortresses and their ruins

NEXT time we hear of the fortresses of the asuras, it is as *arma* or *armakas*, ruins of cities out of which the descendants of the Vedic Aryans collect *arma-kapālas*, bricks from ruins, for ritual purposes.

The use of agni in the destruction of the *puras*, fortresses, of the dāsas has been discussed above in details. TaiBr. II.4.6.7-8 describes how the cities which were once centres bubbling with activity have become deserted ruins. This passage i.e. v. 8 is cited by T. Burrow in his article 'On the significance of the term *arma* or *armaka* in early Sanskrit literature'[1] where he has identified the deserted ruins mentioned in the ṚV and the Śrautasūtras with the ruins of Indus valley civilization.

na hi spaśam avindan anyam asmāt|
vaiśvānarāt pura etāram agneḥ|
athemamanthan amṛtam amūrāḥ|
vaiśvānaram kṣetrajityāya devāḥ||
yeṣāmime pūrve armāsa āsan|
ayūpāḥ sadma vibhṛtā purūṇi|
vaiśvānara tvayā te nuttāḥ|
pṛthivīmanyāmabhitasthur janāsaḥ||

(The third line in Rajendralal Mitra's edition in the Bibliotheca Indica reads as: *atheme' manthannamṛtam asurāḥ* which is accepted by Burrow. Sāyaṇa seems to have accepted the reading *amūrāḥ* as he glosses *amūra* by *amūḍha*.)

"Of yore there was no other spy (messenger) except Vaiśvānara Agni to discover this. Then the indestructible (?) devas stirred up the immortal Vaiśvānara for the conquest of territory. The people to whom these ruined sites, lacking posts, formerly belonged, these settlements, widely distributed, O Vaiśvānara, having been expelled by thee, have migrated to another land."

It seems that the reading *amūrāḥ* is to be preferred to the other '*asurāḥ*', for the obvious reason that it creates no further

problems. If the reading *asurāḥ* is accepted, the line may read as follows: 'Therefore, the asuras churned the *amṛta*'. This is not in keeping with the mythology in this connection. The difficulty might be partially overcome by taking the term *amṛta* to mean water. It may then mean that the asuras stirred up their water resources to extinguish the fire. However, this is not confirmed by next verse. Instead, it narrates how the people have left their houses and gone to other places. So the reading asuras does not seem to be the correct one.

The mention of *spaśam*, a spy, messenger, refers to the spies of Varuṇa[2] which are mentioned so often in the ṚV. The significance is that none of the spies were looking on when the devas set fire to the houses of the people which were spread over a wide area. As has been already discussed above, the devas used fire generously to destroy the fortresses of the asuras. When the spies of Varuṇa were not looking on, the devas stirred up the fire in order to conquer the territory. The purpose of setting fire to the houses is stated as the conquest of territory. Those people to whom the houses belonged migrated to another land. The use of the term *pṛthivīmanyām* is also significant. The term *pṛthivī* meant broad plain, land and the present usage *pṛthivīmanyām* confirms this interpretation. The passage has no mythic element and in fact the description of the deserted houses and their one time occupants is nothing but realistic. In this context *pṛthivīmanyām* may only mean other plains or in more general terms other lands, and not other earths.

Some of the points which have puzzled Burrow are reviewed here: 1. VS XXX.11, *armebhyo hastipam*, 2. Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra X.19.9, 3. *Vailasthāna* or *Mahāvailasthāna* mentioned in ṚV X.133.1,3. 1. The relation between the *balīs* offered in the *puruṣamedha* sacrifice and the deities seems to be based on the principle that to the essence of the profession seen as its ruling spirit was offered a person of that profession, i.e. to an abstract principle its concretized form. *Armebhyo hastipam* means 'to the deserted ruins (may be offered) the elephant driver'. By *arma* is meant, not the site, but the spirit or essence of *arma*, residing in the *arma*. In order to pacify these spirits, the *hastipa* is to be killed as an offering. The question is: Why particularly the elephant driver? Though the relation is not clear, it is probably because the elephant with its driver was the most characteristic possession of these people who once lived in the ruins. Or, after the people fled, the empty houses occupied by the drivers along with the elephants, which seems unlikely. In any case, long after the cities became ruins, the elephant drivers had lingered on even after the occupants of the houses had fled or were killed. Puruṣamedha provided a convenient way of getting rid of them. This seems to be a possible explanation as most of the *balīs* mentioned appear in the later law books as either *śūdras* or *saṁkīrṇayonis*, mixed castes. It may be possible that *puruṣamedha* was

invented to get rid of these stubborn relics of the asura civilization. 2. Lātyāyana Śrautasūtra X.19.9 prescribes: "He should proceed along the right bank of the Dṛṣadvatī; having reached the ruined site near its source, and having sacrificed there with this sacrifice he should go down to the Yamunā, at Triplakṣāvaharaṇa for his concluding ceremonial bath." Thus the ruined site (*prabhavya arma*) at the source of the Dṛṣadvatī had some special importance on account of which it was included in the rite. The position of the *arma* in the north-east, suggests that this might probably be the place in the north-east where the devas scored their first victory over the asuras. This was called by them *aparājitā*. The act of sacrificing there is reminiscent of the sacrifice (Viṣṇu) offered by the gods in the shade in the ŚB narrative of Viṣṇu the dwarf. The prescribed bath reminds one of the bath taken by the devas in JB I.121 in order to remove the impurity caused by killing the asuras. 3. In Vailasthāna or Mahāvailasthāna mentioned in ṚV I.133.1 and 3, Burrow has noted a foreign element (in *vaila*). It seems possible to derive *vaila* from Bel > Vel and *vaila*, a secondary nominal derivation. Bel was the Sumerian god *Belu*, Lord, Master. This origin of the word may be possible if it is related to the asuras and others, especially the asuras, who may have had an origin outside India.

Burrow treats the term Vailasthāna as a proper noun, a name of the city. Geldner has translated it as the field of corpses (*leichenfeld*) probably following Sāyaṇa's gloss where he seems to be groping for a correct meaning. Burrow on the basis of the description of 'the destruction of enemies who were overpowered and slain and lay around in the Vailasthāna', has identified the place with Mohenjo-daro where traces of slaughter have been found. Besides this, the meaning of Mohenjo-daro seems to be connected with that of Vailasthāna, though the foreign origin of the word as suggested above, does not confirm it. Mohenjo-daro is the Bengali version of an original Sindhi word Muanjo-daḍo where *muan* means corpses, *daḍo* hill, and *jo* indicates the genitive case. Thus the meaning the hill of corpses tallies with Sāyaṇa's gloss, though the basis for this interpretation is not clear.

Probably the name Muan-jo-daḍo is a name given by the Aryans or later generations. The similarity between the Muan-jo-daḍo and Sāyaṇa's gloss may only point to the origin of both to a widely known single tradition. Burrow's observation about the possible foreign origin of the word Vaila and the probability of its coming from Bel > Vel > Vaila also do not solve the problem, as the original name of Mohen-jo-daro is unknown. If Vailasthāna is assumed to be a sanskritized form of the original name of the town, the city was probably named after the god Bel > Vel, a custom prevalent amongst the Assyrians.

ṚV I.133 is significant for in it are brought together practically

all the elements of the conflict between the devas and the asuras and others probably in its later stage. The enmity between the Indra's and the Indraless (*anindrāḥ*), the *amitras*, enemies, Vailasthāna, a ruined city; and the *yātumatīs*, the piśācī and the rakṣas whose destruction Indra is exhorted to bring about. Actually the *amitras* of Vailasthāna were the yātumatīs, the rakṣas and the piśācas.

In the first verse are described the *amitras*, the Indraless who were burnt and were scattered dead on Vailasthāna. vv 2 and 3 refer to the army of *yātumatīs* of whom hundred and fifty were killed by Indra. The passage from Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa cited above, records how the houses of the people were burnt by agni Vaiśvānara. The *puras* belonged to the asuras and the dāsas. ṚV I.133 clearly indicates that the *yātumatīs* and others, the Indraless enemies lived in the *armakas*, the city ruins. The archaeologists have noted that "the city was already slowly dying before its ultimate end. Houses, mounting gradually upon the ruins of their predecessors or on artificial platforms in the endeavour to out-top the floods, were increasingly shoddy in construction, increasingly carved up into warrens for a swarming lower-grade population. Flimsy partitions subdivided the courtyards of houses... Reused brickbats tended to replace new bricks. The city, to judge from excavated areas, was becoming a slum."[3] This has been noticed at Mohenjo-daro. Even the citadel of Harappa was reinhabited which is indicated by the badly built walls, made of reused brickbats in the second stratum of cemetery H. Piggott seems to attribute "the pavements associated with the charred remains of pine and bamboo in what is alleged to be a Harappa stratum elsewhere on the citadel mound",[4] to the huts of squatters in Chahnu-daro II phase immediately succeeding the Harappan phase. It may not be impossible that after the leaders and well-to-do people fled from their houses with their lives, the lower class people took refuge here until they were burnt to death, were sacrificed in the *yajñas* or became servile and served the Aryans.

As these peoples, rakṣas, *yātumatīs* and piśācas were associated with these sacked, burnt, deserted ruins of the cities, they probably came to symbolise for the conquerors the ruling spirits of these places. This became their collective image. Also probably these defeated people who were once flourishing and were now condemned to live in slums for whom it was even difficult to come out in day time as the description probably of a *yātumatī*, going out at night like an owl concealing her body to perpetrate a treachery (ṚV VII.104.16), showered curses on every Aryan she met shows. The curses earned them the epithet *mṛdhravācaḥ*, of harsh speech. The Aryans on account of their sense of guilt could not but be afraid of these curses. Or did some evil befall through some chance or accident, which their guilty conscience attributed to these curses? Later, in Buddhist Tantrism with the non-Aryan elements playing a significant

role, cemeteries, ruins of houses, deserted temples or forests on the outskirts of the villages where visitors are rare, are said to provide ideal places for tantric practices. This was probably the background where these practices were seen performed and hence they became the ideal places for their performances. The Hindu lawgivers classify cemeteries, ruins, outskirts of the villages as suitable abodes for the lowest classes of śūdras, like Chāṇḍalas, Pukkasas, Śvapākas etc.

Although the gloss of Sāyaṇa on Vailasthāna meaning a field of corpses corresponds to the meaning in Sindhi of Mohenjo-daro, no etymologically coherent explanation can be offered. All that it suggests is that a certain tradition had probably survived in spite of the loss of the knowledge of exact events. This is probably what is embodied in the name of Mohenjo-daro. Unfortunately, inquiries about the folk-tales or legends related to Mohenjo-daro have not been very successful. But the probable existence of such a tradition may not be ruled out.

This is the tale told in the ṚV by the poets. Through interpretations suggested above an attempt is made first to establish the human identity of the mythic beings, for which there is ample evidence. Henceforth, the historicity of the events, their agents, and the consequences described in the ṚV will be examined on the basis of the archaeological evidence. As shown above, the findings of the archaeologists in the latest stratum of the Indus civilization closely tally with the description given in ṚV I.133, and that the modern name of the village situated near the archaeological site resembles the gloss of Sāyaṇa on Vailasthāna, although the same meaning cannot be derived directly from the Vailasthāna. Vailasthāna may be the Sanskrit translation of a name derived from another language and may perhaps be derivable from the name Bel or Bilu (i.e. the city of Bel).

The fact that it is possible to render realistic the Ṛgvedic accounts of wars between the Aryans and their non-Aryan enemies after so many centuries' lapse, means that the narratives did convey this sense to the listener and the poet meant them to be understood in this manner. Ṛgveda is the collection of hymns composed in Sanskrit, a language by the consensus of scholars belonging to the Indo-European family of languages. Because of its being the record of the victors, the Aryans, it represents primarily the Aryan point of view. If the point of view represented by Indra was that of the Aryans, naturally Varuṇa, who was also the king and who, after a temporary loss of power, once again ruled the kingdom, with Indra, represents the point of view of the asuras and their allies in these battles. With the interpretations offered above, Indra was possibly the human leader of the Aryans under whose leadership these battles were fought and won. And only at the end of these battles, Indra was offered the crown. In AiBr. VIII.12, all the devas along with Prajāpati come

together and decide to acknowledge Indra as the strongest of them. They therefore wish to crown him. At the end of the ceremony, Indra is conferred, among other titles *puram bhettā*, the breaker of fortresses, *asurāṇāṃ hantā*, the killer of the asuras, *brahmaṇo goptā*, the protector of brahmā-priest.

When the Aryans came into the Indian sub-continent via the north-western passes, they met with considerable resistance from the peoples who were in an advanced stage of civilization, whereas the Aryans were probably nomads in search of cultivable land. If the ṚV represents the Aryan point of view and if Indra was their human leader, the enemies must also be treated as human beings for which there is enough evidence. The literary sources give us the Aryan point of view while the archaeological material furnishes us with the details of life of the non-Aryans who were already here when the Aryans came. Some of the interpretations offered above are amply corroborated by the archaeological findings.

Evidence from the literary sources has amply demonstrated that the ṚV, the most ancient Indo-Aryan composition, may really be telling about the human Aryans with their human foes and their terrestrial victories. The problem may now be looked at from the archaeologists' point of view. This particular arrangement of investigating the two points of view separately has been preferred because of the complicated nature of the problem. If there were only two levels, literary and archaeological, it might have been possible to deal with both types of evidence side by side. The literary evidence could be used only after divesting it of the dross of mythology in order to establish the human identity and the realistic nature of Ṛgvedic narratives. Moreover, had the archaeological evidence been presented in respective places, it might have been a circular argument in which the hypothesis itself is taken for granted. It is hoped the separation of the two types of evidence will avoid this confusion. However, in this method certain amount of repetition seems to be inevitable. It is kept to the minimum.

Archaeology is not a very young discipline. There have been attempts to steer it clear of disciplines like history and anthropology. By its very nature its scope is limited. It is not possible to understand wholly any particular civilization or culture through archaeological evidence alone unless the excavator is lucky enough to find records written in a known language. In case there is no written record, or if the language is unknown as is the case with the Indus script, the story of the civilization has to be limited to the material culture and reports of physical anthropologists and zoologists. At least as far as Indian sub-continent is concerned, the archaeologist can supplement his information by available literary material. This may put the material

cultural remains into a perspective valuable to Indian history. Besides it would test the validity of various recorded traditions.

Notwithstanding the wide extent and large number of sites, the story of Indus civilization is incomplete. It is not known who the people were, their place of origin, the language they spoke etc. Secondly, although the archaeologist knows that it was a well-organised and administered urban civilization spread over a large area, the form of government that successfully administered this vast territory is not known. Thirdly, the religion of the people is known only from the few mythological scenes depicted on the seals, from the female figurines, etc. But it is difficult to reconstruct a coherent picture from these. Fourthly, the causes of the destruction of this civilization are still a controversial issue. Two points of view are prevalent. One would like to attribute the destruction to the natural events like earthquake or the tectonic changes which took place around that time. This view is advanced by R.L. Raikes, a hydraulic engineer turned archaeologist, and supported by archaeologists. The other point of view attributes the final destruction to human agency in the form of the Aryan migrations. Both these points of view have a wide following amongst archaeologists. Some archaeologists have however sought to give a broader basis taking into account the literary sources. Stuart Piggott's efforts to this end as reflected in Chap. VII of 'Prehistoric India' are worth noting as his point of view is the nearest to the thesis developed here. Further, it is of special interest as it represents an archaeologist's view developed independently. Fifthly, the contribution of the Indus civilization to the later cultural developments is not properly assessed. On circumstantial evidence a few cultural traits are traced back to the Indus civilization, but the relationship based on these traits appears to be like two wheels tied together by so many fragile strings which might break with little strain and which do not make the vehicle.

2. Ṛgveda and archaeological evidence

At the beginning of this chapter, the views of Burrow, an eminent Vedic scholar, have been noted. Now the plea of Stuart Piggott for treating Ṛgveda as a source of information about the material culture of composers and the possible destroyers of the Indus civilization known through excavations is examined below. The significance of the view has been pointed out above. The view has double importance: First, an archaeologist is using the literary sources for throwing light on archaeological problem and secondly, that his point of view comes nearest to the thesis developed here. On internal linguistic evidence, the Sanskritists have reached a sort of tacit agreement about the date of the composition of Ṛgveda to be about 1500-1400 B.C.[5] "Yet, tested against the background of archaeology and the movements of peoples in Western Asia

in the middle of the second millennium B.C. as we can now begin to discern them. This date has much to recommend it. In the last chapter, we have seen that there is good archaeological evidence for the arrival in North-West India of invaders from the West in the centuries following 2000 B.C.: these need not be Indo-Europeans, but their arrival is likely to be connected with the general movements from the West about this time in which the Indo-Europeans were involved..." "We shall see that an examination of the material culture of the composers of the Rigveda, as extracted from the allusions in the text, is entirely compatible with what we know of conditions at this time from archaeological evidence from other regions of early Indo-European colonization around the edges of the old city civilizations in Asia and the Aegean. I think, we are justified in accepting the Rigveda, on archaeological grounds, as a genuine document of the period, preserved intact by... The Rigveda is a curious document... These (i.e. hymns)[6] vary from more or less epic chants, hymns of praise, and prayers to the gods, to magic spells and fragments of popular songs, all of very varying standard— 'sometimes true, genuine and even sublime, but frequently childish, vulgar and obscure' as Max Muller remarked... In a word, however barbarous and archaic may be the life and thought reflected in the Rigveda, it is a laborious and sophisticated anthology, put together with conscious artifice by professional hymnologists at a relatively late stage of the culture of those people who in it are called the Aryans (*Ārya*) and who figure as conquerors in a newly-won land. As a source-book, it is full of limitations and difficulties. The archaic Sanskrit in which it is written soon lost its precise significance and by the Indian Middle Ages elaborate commentaries had to be devised to explain the ancient text... This method (i.e. correlating Rigveda and the later literature)[7] of interpretation, however, is one which grew up at a time when the Harappa civilization was still undiscovered and when it was assumed that the Aryan invaders of India encountered only a rabble of aboriginal savages who could have contributed little, save a few primitive animistic beliefs to Vedic thought, to the structure of later Indo-Aryan society. With such an assumption it was safe to regard the whole Vedic corpus as representing in the main an Aryan evolution owing practically nothing to the older vanquished people of the Punjab. But as the preceding chapters of this book have shown, the Aryan advent in India was in fact the arrival of barbarians into a region already highly organised into an empire based on a long-established tradition of literate urban culture. The situation is, in fact, almost reversed, for the conquerors are seen to be less civilized than the conquered. In the Rigveda we see...this conquest from the Aryan point of view alone. They are the heroes, and scant tribute is paid to their contemptible opponents, more skilled in the arts of peace than in those of warfare. But *as* we shall see, *the Harappa tradition is very unlikely to have been suddenly and totally wiped out.*"[8] ...And while referring to the difficulties in using ṚV as a source, he says[9]: "In the hymns the transi-

tion from the more or less literal to the wholly metaphorical is often sudden and frequently almost imperceptible. The physical war-chariot of an Aryan chieftain turns, with bewildering rapidity, into the noon-day sun; the roistering young cattle raiders are suddenly the four winds of heaven. And the accident of survival of words descriptive of aspects of material culture is really dependent on their adaptability to religious metaphor and their appropriateness to the warrior aristocracy for whom the hymns were composed; chariots are described in such detail..., *but we hardly know what the Aryan house looked like.*"[10]

Analysing the RV material where he attributes the destruction of Indus civilization to the use of fire and destruction of bunds built to protect the Harappan cities from flood, he remarks: "The archaeological evidence given in detail in Chapter V fits so well with the tale of conquest in the Rigveda that it is difficult to come to any other conclusion. The forts of the dasyus are the citadels of the Harappa civilization, wrecked and plundered by the war-bands who invoked Indra, Lord of Hosts, as they slaughtered those who would not accept his supremacy."[11]

This lengthy quotation from Piggott acquaints us with an archaeologist's views on the problem of using Ṛgveda as a possible source not only for the Aryan way of life as reflected in the material culture but for, what has not been spelt out clearly, the information about the life of the enemies of Aryans. Either Piggott did not visualise this possibility or he did not wish to spell it out clearly. Since he has talked about the citadels and their peculiarities, he was vaguely conscious of the possibility of using Ṛgveda as a source for filling up the gaps in the knowledge about the Harappan civilization. What is most important here is that his are an archaeologist's views on the use of literary material for the understanding of the archaeological problems.

R.E.M. Wheeler in his latest edition of "The Indus Civilization" identifies the *puras* of Ṛgveda with the citadels of Indus civilization: "Where are—or were—these citadels? It has until recently been supposed that they were mythical, or were 'merely places of refuge against attack, ramparts of hardened earth with palisades and a ditch.' The discovery of fortified citadels at Harappa or Mohenjo-daro, supplemented by the defences of the Harappan sites of Sutkagen-dor in Makran, Ali Murad in Sind, Kalibangan in Rajasthan and others have changed the picture. Here we have a highly evolved civilization of essentially non-Aryan type, now known to have employed massive fortifications, and known also to have dominated the river system of north-western India at a time not distant from the likely period of the earlier Aryan invasions of that region. What ultimately destroyed this firmly settled civilization? What gave the *coup de grace*?"[12] This view was first propounded in 1947.[13]

From the archaeological standpoint the identification of the Aryans as the destroyers of the Indus civilization is based on commonsense logic and circumstantial evidence which leave the archaeological problems unsolved. In spite of the identification of one party, the builders of these citadels are still unknown. On the other hand, the literary sources i.e. the ṚV and Brāhmaṇas clearly state that the Aryans destroyed the foes who were called the Asuras, Dāsas, Dasyus, Paṇis, Rakṣas, Gandharvas, Yakṣas and Piśācas. The human identity of these has been already established in the earlier part of this work. The Ṛgvedic narratives forming the basis of later religious literature like Brāhmaṇas are shown to have been originally meant in the realistic sense. The mythopoeic process is also clarified. The second part of this work is devoted to the demonstration of the validity of the literary sources in juxtaposition with the relevant archaeological evidence. The conclusions arrived at in Part I are sought to be correlated with the available archaeological material on different levels like the Harappan and post-Harappan. Partial analysis and interpretation of the archaeological data are available in reports of the excavations. Here besides additional analysis, problems relating to the archaeological material are looked at from anthropological point of view. Most of the archaeologist's problems may find solutions in the process. This should also serve to resolve any doubts still lingering about the true identity of the devas and the asuras and others.

Every paragraph will first refer to the conclusions reached on the basis of the literary evidence which will be supported by the archaeological evidence. The sequence in Part I will be followed in Part II.

PART II

X

1. Why the Aryans?

ALTHOUGH the Aryan migration to India is firmly establised on the basis of linguistic evidence, archaeologically it is still a controversial issue. To a certain extent the eastward movement of the people has been established, albeit with certain flaws in the argument.

The archaeological evidence centres round certain findings in and around the Indus valley. Different types of weapons recorded over a wide area and destruction of settlements have been thought of as signs of the arrival of a new people in the region. The argument may be briefly summarised as follows: In Rana Ghundai (abbr. RG) IIIc phase the settlement which so far had yielded continuous occupation strata had been sacked and burnt—'everywhere overlying the foundation level there are pockets of ashes, as though some great conflagration had taken place'. This was followed in RG IV by a completely new type of pottery. After this the settlement is burnt again and in RG V a change in pottery shows a new folk settling on the mound. Thus these two phases in RG may represent times of troubles. In the Zhob valley, at the site of Nal the settlement was burnt to such an extent that the mound came to be known by that event Sohr Damb, the Red Mound, as the fire had burnt the soil red. At Dabar Kot, to the south of Rana Ghundai, the upper six feet of the tell had four layers of ash signifying the destruction of four subsequent settlements. On the surface were found the fragments of the RG V type. In Baluchistan, at Shahi-tump a cemetery had been made in the ruins of an abandoned settlement of the Kulli culture which yielded a clay toy cart, characteristic of Harappan culture. This may mean that the Shahi-tump cemetery is later than Kulli culture and some phase of Harappa. The burial rites were inhumation with grave goods, consisting of pots mostly and also copper or bronze tools and ornaments, stone beads and alabaster cups. There were two burials having richer grave goods and seven groups of grave goods without recognizable human remains. "The pottery from all the burials is consistent and characteristic. The ware is very good, hard and thin, varying from grey to pinkish and sometimes having a clear, yellowish-buff colour."[1] The types of vessels are a shallow bowl—usually with a rather sophisticated foot-ring, and similar forms in varying sizes from large bowls to cups, beakers—globular or conical, footed bowls

and a bowl on four legs and a couple of triple vessels. The pottery appears to be pointed with a soft brush in black or reddish brown. The designs lack the careful touch and vigour. The outside of the vessels is painted in zones, sometimes in panels and at the centre is *swastika* or a similar motif. The nearest parallels to this pottery are found in cemetery of Khurab near Bampur where the vessels resembled pots from Mehi, the latest phase or after its abandonment. Khurab and other cemeteries near Bampur may belong to the centuries around or just after 2000 B.C. In general, the potteries at Shahi-tump and similar wares "are descended from the pottery of the buff-ware group best represented in Susa I and other sites in Fars and at greater remove from Samarra". The copper spear and the shaft hole axe found in one of the graves seem to have divergent origins. The former are similar to the Harappan type and the latter are probably derived from the Sumerian and Akkadian prototype. The five copper stamp-seals found at Shahi-tump are said to be "even more explicit in their western relationships", the only other example from Baluchistan being from the Sohr Damb at Nal from the final phase. They are distinct from the Harappan seals (pl. 1, i-v). Seals of Shahi-tump style, circular and compartmental pattern, bear resemblance to the types found in Hissar IIb and IIIb, in Anau III, and at Susa, which may suggest a date "about 2000 BC. or a little later". Piggott has also noted the increased contact between Mohenjo-daro in the final phase and the Kulli culture and the appearance of the pottery and stone vessels of south Baluchistan types in the later levels of Harappan occupation at Mohenjo-daro.

Further the Harappan settlements of Chanhu-daro, Jhukar and Lohumjo-daro are said to bear the traces of the occupation by those who destroyed these Harappan towns. At Chanhu-daro, the Harappan phase is followed by what is called after the type site, Jhukar-culture. The Jhukar-culture people built some house-walls with bricks stolen from the other parts of the mound. There are some pavements of brick which might have formed the floors of tents or some sheds of perishable walling, such as matting. Fireplaces were introduced by these people in the old houses in the doorways or niches. Abundant and characteristic pottery, stamp-seals, amulets, beads, metal tools and pins, bone awls and probably two pottery head-rests, one painted and another unpainted, have been found.[2] The pottery is a buff ware with ornamental designs painted in black and red. The forms include small-footed jars and bottles of types which have parallels in Baluchistan but also include types like offering-stands and saucers, with a looped pattern on the edge, which may be derived from Harappa or from the Kulli culture. The use of red slips is yet another link between Harappan and Jhukar ware. Besides Harappan ware, Jhukar pottery resembles the Amri wares in the use of red bands and geometric style of decoration. The rhomb, four-petalled rosette and loop as motifs also seem to be popular. The use of pink slips and

brown paints is common to Amri and Jhukar, though the forms of the latter ware are different. The excavator has pointed out the striking analogies between the Jhukar and Tell Halaf potteries. The shapes of the vessels are quite different but the Jhukar decorations are more advanced and sophisticated in style. The common decorations consist of red bands dividing some vessels of both the cultures, chequer patterns with crossed lines used to fill blank squares, zig-zag pattern in two colours, rhomb motifs with incurved sides, the use of horizontal and vertical hatching as a border pattern, and figure of eight or bukranium pattern. Mackay, the excavator, who was not able to account for the similarities between these articles, comments: "It is difficult to explain why two such widely separated cultures should have so many points in common as regards their pottery decoration, for to term these fortuitous appears to me to underestimate the evidence. It is possible that the Tell Halaf people wandered far afield, taking their ceramic craft with them... Sufficient evidence now exists to prove that the Jhukar people in later times also had associations with their neighbour on the west."[3] The excavator further points out the relations between Jhukar pottery and some wares of Baluchistan. He attributes the similarities to the trading and cultural links in the Harappan period as well as later in the Jhukar period, "for certain wares which are either of Jhukar manufacture or locally made copies, have come to light in several parts of Baluchistan". The Baluchistan pottery (on Mackay's authority) was slipless and decorated in black which features appeared in some of the pottery of Jhukar also.

Several small vessels from Periano-ghundai in North Baluchistan bore resemblance to those found in Damb Buthi in Sind. Mackay has perceived similarities in a large jar found along with the small vessels, and the Jhukar types. Some of the decorations on the Baluchistan pottery are the same as those found in, for example, the plant device which appears at Chanhu-daro[4] very frequently. At Jai-damb in Southern Baluchistan was found a sherd bearing the ball and stem motif found on the Jhukar pottery.[5] Similarities between the polychrome sherds of Sur Jangal and related wares in feel, colour, and minuteness of design to that of Tell Halaf have been noted which Mackay does not find surprising. He thinks Sur Jangal was earlier than Jhukar ware. The seals found at Chanhu-daro are made of pottery, faience, stone and metal and are completely different from those of Harappan sites. Not only that they lack any inscription, but they are different in shape. Circular seals are rare in Harappa. They are of the types common to the West Asian group. One seal bears a pattern precisely comparable to that of seals from the cemetery of Shahi-tump (pl. 2, nos. i-iv; also see pl. 1, nos. i, iii, iv). It seems that another seal[6] bears a design approximating to a pictograph of the Indus valley script. It is said to have been found in the Jhukar strata of Chanhu-daro. The seal is of oval shape and the back of

the seal is covered with a cross somewhat identical with a pictograph (pl. 3) or else it may be just a compartmentalised design. Apart from these possible similarities, attributable to the mix up of the lower stratum with the later one due to digging, there is little that lends to comparison between the Harappan seals and those of the Jhukar stratum of Chanhu-daro.

Piggott finds similarity between the stone bead found at Lohumjo-daro and the beads of the Hissar IIIc and Anau III. At Chanhu-daro III, the long barrel-shaped faience beads find parallels in Jamdet Nasr and Early dynastic contexts in Sumer.

The copper shaft-hole axe found in Chanhu-daro II has parallels at Shahi-tump cemetery and the series of pins are without parallel anywhere in the Harappan culture, But these are known at Sumer in Early dynastic times and also in Hissar IIIb. Bone awls are also said to be yet another novelty which, Mackay thinks, might have been employed for mat-weaving.

This assortment of things is attributed to a new people who arrived from the west. They were either the first hordes destroying the Harappan culture or followed the earlier raiders. The emphasis of the archaeologist who tries to read the signs of the time from the cultural stratum as a whole shifts to rather the portable things which seem to provide clues for the origin of the raiders.

In Mohenjo-daro, in the last phase of the city, besides the hoards of jewellery and other precious objects indicating disturbed state of affairs, there is a visible fall in the civic standards. Skeletons found lying unburied in the streets indicate insecurity of life of those who survived the disaster.

Besides these, a copper axe-adze with a shaft tube found in a late stratum, a type foreign to the Harappan culture, seems to be an import from the west where it survived as late as 9th c. B.C. A group of implements are described by Piggott as swords with mid-rib, a style foreign to the Harappa tradition. Their nearest parallels are found in Palestine in the Hyksos period between 1800 and 1500 B.C. Alongside these signs of trouble and arrival of items of warfare made in far-off lands, is also cited a burial found in the deserted courtyard of a house in HR area of Mohenjo-daro. In this burial is found a pot which is seemingly akin to cemetery H pottery and its painted motif, to those of Kulli or Jhukar ware.

In Harappa, cemetery H with two strata is a somewhat controversial issue. In stratum I (later) are found pot-burials without any grave goods. In stratum II (earlier), the skeletons are in a flexed or stretched

position with the grave goods at the head and feet. In both the strata the burial jars and the accompanying pottery are distinct in shapes and the painted decorations from that of the Harappan culture. In the decoration, peacock or rather a highly stylized mythic bird seems to be the most important motif (see pl. 4). Besides it cattle, fish, goats, dog, and at certain places human beings also appear. Stars of various kinds, ring-&-dot patterns, groupings of straight and wrinkled lines and short lengths of zig-zag lines are used to fill the empty spaces. The decoration sometimes goes round the vases in continuous scenes. Besides these on the lids covering the large jars, leaf and tree motifs are also available. In the former, a leaf resembling pipal-leaf drawn in a sloppy style may be identified[8] (pl. 4, no. i). The leaf, as will be seen below, is associated in mature Harappan times with a divinity. Piggott sees similarity in the star and bird motifs appearing on the pots of Giyan II cemetery of c. 1550-1200 B.C; the treatment of human figures paralleled on Samarra ware and its analogues in Persia. He concludes, "the cemetery H people are certainly newcomers to the Harappa world, but where they came from or what was their later history only further excavation can tell us."[9]

The views of Wheeler on this particular point of cemetery H may be noted because he has conducted excavation at the site. "It has sometimes been suggested that the bearers of the cemetery H culture were the destroyers of the older Harappa. This may be so, and the alleged mingling of Harappan and cemetery H pottery with the human bones in Area G would support the possibility if the evidence was correctly observed. But the excavations of 1946 tended to indicate a hiatus between the two. The great depth of Harappan debris—upto 7 feet or more —which intervened between cemetery R 37 and at any rate the later phase of cemetery H may be due in part to the deliberate filling of a hollow here in late Harappan times. In fact that a part of cemetery H cut into the walls of a derelict Harappan building means only that some Harappan structures were of earlier date. But the remains of jerry-built houses of the cemetery H culture found against the western defences of the citadel on 4 feet of debris can scarcely be so summarily explained. Whether indeed this accumulation occurred before the end of the Indus civilization, as may be the fact, or it represents a post-Harappan, pre-cemetery H hiatus cannot yet be determined. The absence of true Harappan ceramic from cemetery H tells slightly in favour of the latter alternative. At least it is wiser at present not to assume a temporal continuity between the Harappan culture and that of cemetery H."[10] Very little is known about the cemetery H culture and the pottery is found at two other sites in Bahawalpur state at Lurewala and Ratha Theri. The skeletal remains examined by the Anthropological Survey of India[11] indicate four cranial types in the two strata. In the earlier strata there are three types called A, A_1 and B_2. A and A_1 are long-headed and similar to those of cemetery R 37. B_2 type are round-headed and are

described as an Alpine variant comparable with skulls from Hissar III. In the later stratum, types A, A_2 which is distinct from A or A_1, and B_2 are found. A and B_2 are already present in the earlier stratum but A_2 which is described as small-headed is new to Harappa and is identified by the reporters as 'a smaller form of Classic Mediterranean and in all probability not identical with the earlier population of the Harappan culture'. In cemetery R 37, this round-headed element is completely absent, which may mean that the authors of cemetery H culture contained the survivors of the Harappan culture and some unknown newcomers.

Besides this, R. Heine-Geldern[12] who has based his studies mainly on the isolated finds of weapons and other copper-bronze objects, has endeavoured to demonstrate the foreignness of these objects to India. He attributes these objects to a migration which passed through the region south-east of the Caspian sea where its traces can be recognised at Tepe Hissar near Damghan and at Tureng Tepe near Asterabad. It came from the very area where historians place the bulk of the Indo-Aryan people at the time—15th-14th c. B.C.—when some of its more adventurous groups swarming out towards the south and south-west had acquired mastery over the kingdom of Mitanni and parts of Syria. Amongst the evidence he cites a number of finds from different places: a trunnion axe from the Kurram valley near Shalozan, a bronze dagger from Fort Monroe (west of Indus), copper swords with antennae hills from Gangetic plain and from Hyderabad, a pin with two deer-top an axe-adze from Mohenjo-daro, a bronze mace-head and the Jhukar seals from Chanhu-daro. He dates all this evidence on the basis of parallels around 1200 B.C. W. Fairservis also reaches the same date for the Aryan migrations on the basis of his researches in the Quetta valley.[13]

The fact of the Aryan migration to India cannot be questioned in any way. But the archaeological data at the eastern end needs to be reviewed.

First is considered the cemetery at Shahi-tump, which is supposed to be in the ruins of an abandoned settlement of the Kulli culture, which was some way connected with the Harappan culture. The burial rites seem to be fairly akin to those observed in cemetery R 37 of Harappa. They consisted, in general, of the practice of inhumation along with the grave goods and the articles of personal use including ornaments and weapons though the latter are not found in the Harappan burials. The pottery is well made and has parallels in the cemetery of Khurab near Bampur. This pottery seems to descend from the pottery of Susa I and other sites in Fars or from Samarra which is still further off, which means this type cannot be paralleled from types originating in regions west of Assyria.

In his typological and design-wise analysis as well as in the clear-cut distinction between the funerary ware and daily use ware in texture, Stein has demonstrated that the Shahi-tump ware and the custom on which the distinction is based may find parallel in Susa I. He attributes the defects and a certain restriction on the variety of motifs in the case of funerary ware 'to a well-established convention for which tenacious tradition fostered by religious notions supplies the obvious explanation. An exact parallel to the peculiarities just indicated, distinguishing the funerary ware of Shahi-tump from the ordinary painted pottery of this and other Makran sites of approximately similar date, is furnished by the painted pottery found in the graves of the earliest zone at Susa and known as Susa I.' '... in the case of the funerary ware, they show for the most part shapes and decorative patterns which tradition had taken over from the pottery made for practical use in an earlier period of chalcolithic civilization and preserved with religious care in order to enable the dead to live their future life after the fashion of their ancestors. These shapes and patterns are, with one exception, all such as can be derived from the same prototypes as the ceramic ware intended in actual household use of which remains are preserved for us in the interior of the Shahi-tump mound and at other chalcolithic sites of Makran. The exception referred to is the Svastika like motif which has not been found in the ordinary decorated pottery of any of these sites...'[14] Thus Stein would rather trace back the style of the funerary ware to the earlier ware found at the same site which seems to be likely. Besides this, other objects found at the site also can have parralles at Susa IB. The 'comparted seals' of Piggott, Stein describes as 'studs', look quaintly similar to those found in Susa IB and are described as button and bead seals. Especially seal 7, Fig. 77 in Childe's 'New Light on the Most Ancient East' bears close resemblance to the type found in Shahi-tump cemetery. Another seal[15] has exactly the same rounded type of anti-clockwise Svastika found practically on all flat plates of the earlier levels of Shahi-tump. The copper axe with a shaft hole may not seem to be such an alien object when compared with shaft hole adzes of copper and stone found in Susa IB. Briefly, what is implied is that the people who buried their dead in Shahi-tump, just as their funerary furniture which bore close resemblance to Susa IA pottery, may have also inherited shaft hole technique from the ancestral branch. The name of the mound of Shahi-tump, if indeed it is preserved without much change, may have a tale to tell. It seems that the mound was used by a royal family as their funeral mound for a long time. The continuity both in pottery tradition and the bull-cult found at various levels is indicatory of its use by identical people. Other objects which may provide an important clue as to the dating of the mound might be the alabaster cups found in the lowest strata (between 14'-20'). They may once again be paralleled at Susa IC or D, at least as far as the use of alabaster, if not the shape, goes. This may mean that the earliest stratum of the Shahi-

tump mound may have been first used as a cemetery or occupied sometime between 3550 B.C. to 3200 B.C.[16] Besides this, one more piece deserves to be noticed separately and that is the 'fragment of a small vase of dark gray clay (or stone ?) which bears an incised geometrical pattern composed of motifs which are closely akin to those found on painted chalcolithic ware from Zhob and Sistan sites'. This is Stein's description of the piece. Stein's photograph of the fragment shows it more like the steatite (stone)-vases. The recent archaeological discoveries at Tepe Yahya show it to be a flourishing centre for such goods during the period 3000 B.C.-2500 B.C. If this identification of the material of the vase is correct (as I have had no chance to examine the piece myself), the level iii may be dated round about that time. Most of the burials as shown in Stein's Pl. 7 lie above this level and the site is turned into cemetery. From the sketch plan there are seemingly five levels of burials which may indicate certain continuity. Sixth is the level on basis of which the appearance of foreigners is postulated. Considering the continuity, this seems to be unlikely. If the frequency of the burials is considered, the period covered by the burials may not be more than two to three hundred years which would be much too early to associate with Aryan invasion. Still another important point is the report on the skeletons found in the topmost layer i.e. at the top of the mound. The type of one of the two skulls could not be determined because of the damages. But the other is described as dolichocephalic and in general the bones are described as: 'In both appearance and texture they are very similar to bones that have been excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India at Mohenjo-daro in Sind and at Nal in Baluchistan...'[17] Finally, it is contradictory if Shahi-tump cemetery is to be attributed to the foreigners approaching the Indus valley, as also cemetery H with the new skull type found in the pot-burials, the round heads. At Shahi-tump, the skull type is long-headed whereas in cemetery H the intrusive new element to be identified as the Aryan type is round-headed. Besides if the Shahi-tump cemetery is attributed to foreigners, with inhumation etc. burial rites, cemetery H pot-burials might imply a profound change in the burial rites of a people within a short span of, at the most, a few years. Is it possible?

Besides no agreement has yet been reached about the Indo-European or proto-Aryan skull type and about the burial rites. If the 'pit grave' type is taken to represent the Aryan burial, the important missing elements would constitute the 'paint of red ochre, remains of domesticated horse and the corded ware' none of which are found anywhere on the Shahi-tump cemetery. The importance that the ochre colour gains in later Indian tradition can be easily understood when it is considered in this light and apparently this might have been of some significance to the earlier Aryans. The images of gods and even stones meant as gods are anointed with red ochre giving them sanctity. If other burial rite

of 'urnfields' is taken to be the basic rite, none of the bones discovered so far have been found buried after cremation. Instead the pot-burials from cemetery H reveal traces of exposure before burial.

The seals 'even more explicit in their western relationships', are once again paralleled at Susa and Hissar IIb and IIIb. If these parallels are correct, it would mean that even before Aryans reached Hissar which was in the IIIc phase (1950 B.C.) there was trouble at Shahi-tump and probably it could be attributed to some elements from that region. Thus this provides an answer to the affinities with the western world. Chanhu-daro-Jhukar phase also shows affinities with Tell Halaf and Samarra ware as well as those of Baluchistan. All these may be dated with the help of the parallels, as has been done by Piggott, around 2000 B.C.

The disturbances at Rana Ghundai IIIC and again after RG IV and V are also counted as times of trouble. The mound of Dabar Kot revealed four layers of ash over which were found sherds of RG V type which might imply that both the mounds after the destruction were inhabited by the destroyers. As the excavations of Stein show, the mound of Dabar Kot has at least five layers of ash and after each the occupation is resumed again. Here again the explanation of 'times of trouble' seems untenable. Fires might be a frequent phenomenon in arid areas of Baluchistan where even a little carelessness might have led to a disaster. If these are all taken to be signs of trouble the trouble really starts from RG IIIC phase. RG V cannot be attributed to the trouble makers. If RG IV, the earlier stage, is attributed to them, the destruction of their settlement must be attributed to some others probably the RG V people. Thus the latest i.e. RG V which is paralleled in the latest phase of Dabar Kot cannot be really identified with the Aryans. At Sohr Damb only a part of the mound is burnt but not the whole, as is made out.

The cause of the fire can be attributed to anything else except Aryan migration. The invading hordes may set fire to the whole settlement. The pottery and other items found in the cemetery of Shahi-tump and a copper seal at Sohr Damb may point to an origin in southern Iran and not really further away from Iraq. There are many problems which cannot be satisfactorily answered at the present state of knowledge. The presence of pottery type is an unmistakable indication of its belonging to the Middle Eastern types. Secondly, the headrests in Chanhu-daro have parallels at Boghazköy IV. Thirdly, the custom of arms as the grave furniture may also be Caucasian or from Asia Minor. The affiliations of burial rites, the mythological scenes depicted on the funerary ware and the skull type found in cemetery H are the questions to which satisfactory answers are not available and it is premature to associate the finds with the Aryan migration.

A look into such a hypothesis may bring out further difficulties. The main point is the route of the migration. Recent archaeological researches into settlements in Southern Turkmenia have revealed a relationship between the destroyed settlements and the Indus valley civilization. It is likely that the Aryan migrants came into India through the northern passes rather than, as indicated by Piggott's theory, via the southern route running parallel to the sea-coast. This hypothesis implies that the Aryans then passed through the Harappan settlements and sacked Mohenjo-daro without much resistance. After Mohenjo-daro some went to Jhukar and stayed there. Another branch proceeding to Chanhu-daro, sacked the town and settled on the deserted ruins.

This seems difficult as the cultural assemblage found at most of these sites shows affinities with Iran and Baluchistan. The kind of life the nomadic Aryans might have led is not borne out by the traces of material culture left behind by them. Their pottery seems to be too good to be made by a migrating folk. The explanation offered by the supporters of this theory is that these nomads engaged the local craftsmen to make pottery for them. But, here two objections may be raised: First, would those nomads 'who travelled light' as evident from the assemblages supposedly left by them at Chanhu-daro and Shahi-tump, travel with fragile pottery or would they know how to build houses even with stolen bricks as is found in Chanu-daro? Attribution of the repair of the houses to these nomads seems also to bestow on them the knowledge of the technique of building of a fairly advanced stage as is reflected in the brick pavements constructed by them for huts or tents or other temporary shelters. Secondly, the religious beliefs, as reflected both in the burial rites and the painted decorations on the pottery at Shahi-tump cemetery and cemetery H, seem to be more akin to the cultures west of the Indus valley like Mesopotamia, Susa, etc. If the Aryans had a homeland which is, roughly speaking, farther west than these countries with a distinct culture of their own, it would surely have been reflected in some of their practices. The practice of furnishing the graves with grave goods and the items of personal use is a practice which was spread over a large area in the ancient day. In associating the burial rites, as reflected in cemetery H with the Aryans, there are certain difficulties: The practice of cremating and burying the bones of individuals separately in urns is associated with the peoples of so-called 'urnfield' cultures which extended over large parts of Central Europe from *13th c. onwards*. This custom goes back to 1700 B.C. and possibly earlier in Central Europe, but the rite of cremation was unknown elsewhere in Anatolia and the Middle East before c. 1500 B.C. In a 15th c. text from Nuzi in the Hurrian language is mentioned the cremation of a king named Parattarna, perhaps an Aryan dynast. The pot-burials of cemetery H represent the remains of the dead after they were exposed. This practice is nowhere associated with the Aryans, whereas it is recorded

by Vats elsewhere at Harappa on Mound AB in a house of stratum IV. Marshall has described it as being contemporaneous with Late III period of Mohenjo-daro.

The depictions of a highly stylized mythic bird resembling peacock are indicative of a religious belief in the transcendental capacity of the bird. This is further emphasised by the depictions of stars with which it is surrounded. The little human-shape inside its stomach is reminiscent of the burial practice current amongst Iranians and the Indian Parasis who expose the dead to be eaten by birds in the towers of silence (pl. 4, no. ii). The belief may be ultimately traced back to the symbolic identity of the solar god Asura-Ahura with the solar bird which passes through the sky daily. In fact, the winged solar disc, the symbol of Ashura, is composed of two elements the bird and the centrally seated god. Thus by feeding the birds with the flesh a kind of return to the god is enacted. The depiction of the stars points to the celestial nature of the bird. If the burials in the funerary urns found in cemetery H are really fractional or post-exposure burials, then this hypothesis may find additional support. The depiction of the man holding two cows or bulls, one of them attacked by a dog, is taken to refer to the story of Yama and his canine messengers. But this appears to be a loose interpretation because what the man is seen holding are the cows or bulls but not dogs. If at all these depictions reflect any beliefs, they may be of Iranian origin, which have been discussed above. Even though sloppily drawn, the pipal branch motif drawn within a solar disc (pl. 4, no. i) is also a strong argument for the religious beliefs going back to the Harappans rather than the Aryans.

If the nomads who destroyed the Harappan civilization were sagacious enough to make use of the local craftsmen and their arts, thus creating a cozy existence for themselves, why is it that they did not continue this practice after they decided to shift from the Indus valley to Gaṅgā-Yamunā valley? The sacredness attributed to the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā in the later Aryan tradition, as reflected in Mahābhārata and the Aryan scriptures, is indicative of their importance in the early days. If it is taken for granted that after the initial stay at the sites of the towns inhabited by their enemies, they once again migrated to Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab, the question would arise: Why did they not take the craftsmen and technology along with them for a better life? The available archaeological evidence does not display any direct correlation between the wares found at cemetery H, or Jhukar type or the Shahi-tump cemetery and the sites which occupy conspicuous position in the Aryan tradition. Take, for example, the site of Hastināpura. The archaeological sequence began with rolled fragments of ochre coloured ware without any evidence of the structures and habitation was sporadic. Below this stratum was virgin soil. The ochre coloured pottery (abbr. OCP)

was followed by desertion. The date assigned is 'pre-1200 B.C.' The absence of structures and sporadic habitation bear testimony to nomadic habits of the people. Period I (1100 B.C.-800 B.C.) saw a distinct pottery type called painted grey ware and black slipped ware, ordinary red and red slipped ware. Mud-wall structure, or mud bricks, also reed walls with mud plaster must have been in use. Use of copper is reflected in arrow-heads. Iron-slags are found in the uppermost levels. In general, the picture in the upper layers is of a settled agricultural community. But the pottery has no painted decoration and its shapes are different from those of cemetery H. The two sites of Bargaon and Ambkheri in district Saharanpur of Uttar Pradesh have been stratified by the excavator, M.N. Deshpande, as late-Harappan and degenerate Harappan[18] respectively. In both cases he has seen influence of cemetery H in shapes and painted decorations. If his assessment is correct (the complete report is not yet available), the cemetery H users may be identified with a group of Harappans themselves. Further the burial at Mohenjo-daro made in the ruins of a deserted courtyard of a house in the HR area which Piggott attributes to the invaders may not really be so. This burial consists of a few bones and a human skull accompanied by other objects such as small vases, beads, a shell spoon etc. One pot found in the group is of a type common to Harappa in century H.[19] Its painted decoration rather recalls Kulli or Jhukar motifs. The skull clearly belongs to the Mongolian group. It may be recalled that a similar burial consisting of a skull, a large conch-shell and beneath the skull small hoard of copper and bronze implements (two flat celts, one short celt, another chisel like instrument and a bangle) was found at Chanhu-daro by Mackay.[20]

There are no other bones except the skull and no vases or pots as grave goods. But the well stratified context is Harappan. Since one of the pots in the HR area burial resembles those at cemetery H, there is room to think of some relationship with cemetery H. Moreover, the burial rites appear to be identical with cemetary H, stratum I. As will be shown subsequently, the Mongoloid group formed a section of the Harappan population. This fact, along with the burial at Chanhu-daro, may indicate that the cemetery H people were the left-overs of the Harappan population, which is further confirmed by the presence of two types of skulls found in the earlier cemetery R 37. At least a section of the Harappan population might have lived on. This seems to be more plausible. Literary evidence also lends support to this. The ruins were said to have been occupied by the hated and defeated Rakṣas and Piśācas. It may also be that after fleeing initially they might have come back, when the calm prevailed, to occupy their houses. With a feeling of insecurity they eked out an existence in the jerry built houses recorded by Wheeler in his period IV. They are "poorly constructed buildings, presumably dwellings, with walls sometimes only one brick in thickness. The interest of these structures lies in the fact that they are associated

with pottery of the 'cemetery H' industry and that they clearly post-date the citadel as a disciplined and effective unit. Two drains, built on the surviving summit of the steps beside Entrance B, probably belong to this period." The occupants of these houses, though impoverished, were familiar with construction of buildings and also had an idea of drainage etc. The period, passed between the fleeing and coming back, may be indicated by the debris layer. The new ethnic type which appears in cemetery H-I is represented by the skulls of female alone. If these are attributed to the Aryans, the ratio of male-female mortality would be zero to hundred! The cephalic index 73-75 may fall within the dolichocephalic index and it seems to point to the A type. In fact, there seems to be a continuity between the cemetery R 37 and cemetery H types. Even if the cemetery H-I skulls are considered round heads, it was not that the round-heads were altogether absent in the previous stratum or in cemetery R 37. Thus this also cannot be taken to be a completely extraneous type.

More than anything else, if the round-heads of cemetery H-I are taken to represent the Aryan population, it can be objected to on two grounds which appear to be rather basic: First, it assumes the knowledge of the skulls of the Indo-Aryan speaking population, which as a race is hitherto not confirmed. Secondly, it assumes that the victors and the vanquished populations buried their dead together, which seems to be an unlikely proposition, especially in view of the details of the struggle and the hatred of the defeated people towards the victors, as reflected in the Ṛgvedic hymns, and the later mythic constructions in which the vilification of non-Aryan population into symbols of evil is indicative of the feelings of the victors. Another indication of the real feelings of the victors is the later social structure viz. the caste-system in which clear distinction was made between the victors and the vanquished. It seems to be extremely unlikely that the pre-Aryans and Aryans shared the same cemetery. In India, even now the cremation grounds of different castes and faiths are separate.

These revised (cemetery H-I) religious beliefs and with it the revised burial rites were not utterly unfamiliar to the Harappans with the practice of pot-burial as is noted in the case of the HR area or the Chanhudaro burial. It is obvious from the skull types that some sections of Harappan population did survive and that they did change the burial rites from earth burials to pot-burials. ŚB[21] also associates pot-burials with the asuras and the easterners. Fractional burials are common even now amongst Indian Parasis, who originally came from Persia. Amongst the asuras and others, whoever had the means to flee, did so with as many belongings as was possible to carry, to the west. Most probably they settled down in Iran where Avestan tradition representing the asura point of view of the struggle came into existence. The migration of

Parasis to India in historical times may thus become a return to their homeland.

If cemetery H, Jhukar phase at Chanhu-daro, Jhukar, Shahi-tump cemetery, RG V etc. are attributed to the Aryans, as is usually done, at least a few typological similarities in pottery, structures and other items of material culture may be expected. But findings at these sites are isolated and without any interrelations. Moreover, the hiatus at two or three sites cannot be accounted for. While the literary sources attribute destruction of this civilization to the Aryans, the archaeological traces of their material culture are not found immediately over the destroyed cities and settlements of the pre-Aryans. The hiatus precludes this finding and therefore it may be concluded that though the Aryans destroyed the Indus civilization, they did not settle on its ruins. Probably because the civilization was only weakened upto an irrevivable point and had to be left there to run the course to its complete decay and destruction besides the inherent fear created by the bravery of the Asuras and others and the feeling of guilt that they have been the cause of injustice which sin might bring evil on them. As has been noted, ṚV clearly retains traces of the occupation of the ruins of houses by the non-Aryans. The variety in pottery-industry at these different sites might be attributed to the lack of central authority and impoverished state. Probably it may be profitable to compare these new types of pottery to the pre-Harappan wares, if available, at these sites, which might reveal the affinities with and revivals of the local pottery traditions.

Further the attribution of the cultural assemblage to Aryans implies a certain period of settled life at these places. Then the question arises where did they go after this short interval of settled life? And why did they go? Did the defeated people gather enough strength to drive them out? If they wandered away to certain other places means that they had not yet finally taken to a settled agricultural way of life and secondly, did they leave behind any of their folk and if so, why traces of their material culture are not found in continuous strata?

The observations of Wheeler in connection with the Harappan layer and cemetery H at Harappa have been cited above. His findings point to a hiatus between these strata. As observed by Mackay, there seems to have been a hiatus between the Harappan layer and the Jhukar layer above it at Chanhu-daro. "The date at which these Jhukar people occupied Mound II would seem to have been round about 1700 B.C., possibly a little earlier if our estimate be correct that Chanhu-daro was finally deserted by the Harappa I people about 2300 B.C."[22] Even if the dates proposed by Mackay have to be revised, the possibility of a hiatus between the two strata remains. At Lohumjo-daro, no hiatus between the Harappan and the Jhukar layers was reported but the Harappan

layer was sealed with sun-burnt bricks above which burnt brick structures were constructed. As literary sources maintain the downfall of Indus valley civilization was not sudden. It must have been a gradual process stretched over several years, as revealed in the excavations of Wheeler at Harappa in 1946. The blocking of Entrance B by a screen-wall and reduction in the breadth of the Entrance indicate strong security measures. Entrance C was entirely blocked by a barrier of baked and unbaked brick. The brick construction is rougher than before, indicative of a pressing need to finish the work or an impoverished state. Thus the trouble had actually started and in Period IV there is already more than four feet of debris fallen from the wall. It might have differed according to the localities, and also in time, as has been suggested by Wheeler: 'There is no reason to suppose, and little likelihood, that a very major city such as Mohenjo-daro either began or ended its life simultaneously with relatively minor towns...'[23] If this were so, some traces of Aryans and the Harappans together, in what would be archaeologically called the same stratum, should be found. (And in fact recent archaeological researches do provide a clue of this nature which will be discussed later.) However, none of the sites mentioned above provide any such clues. Therefore, it may be possible to conclude that probably none of these sites were occupied by the Aryans.

The hiatus between cemetery R 37 and cemetery H is interpreted as an indication of the discontinuity between the pre-Aryan and Aryan or Hindu cultures. To understand the relationship between them, the question to be asked is: Why do the Aryan and later Hindu tradition attribute so much sacredness to Gaṅgā and Yamunā? Probably in answering this the answers to many other problems may be found. Before looking into this, the remaining evidence of the Aryan-migration may be discussed.

This evidence has been considered by R. Heine-Geldern and S. Piggott. Most of the finds are isolated and paralleled in Europe (trunnion axe in the Kurram Valley, N.W.F.P. of the Indian sub-continent), Luristan graves of Persia and Caucasus (bronze sword found in Rajanpur, Punjab). The antennae swords of the Fathgarh hoard (Figs. 1, 2) are according to Heine-Geldern to be ultimately connected with European swords but strongly influenced by North Caucasian forms of Koban culture. B.B. Lal, however, disagrees with this.

2. The copper implements

These stray finds of copper weapons and other implements may be treated separately from the cultures represented at cemetery H, Shahitump cemetery, the Jhukar culture, etc. because these copper implements are not accompanied by any other items of material culture,

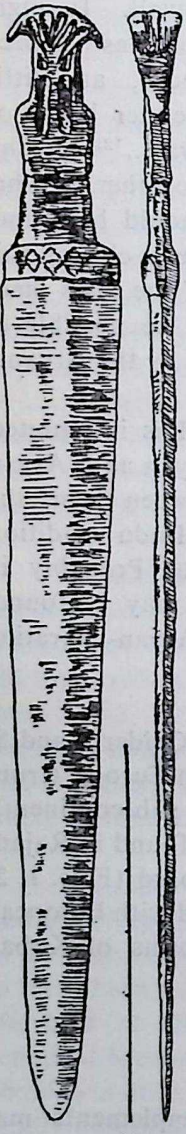


Fig. 1 The bronze sword with the characteristic hilt found in Rajanpur, Punjab (after S. Piggott)

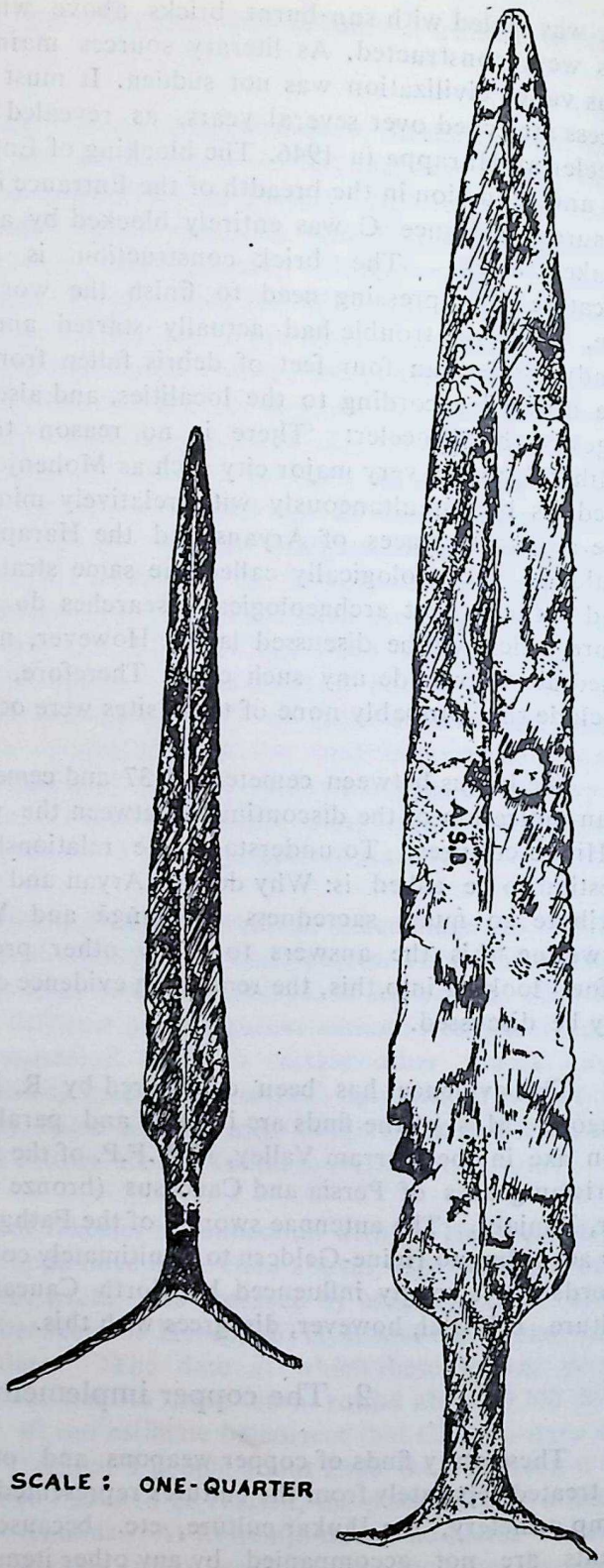


Fig. 2 The 'antennae swords' with mid-rib from Fathgarh (after V.A. Smith)

such as structures and pottery. These finds are called in general as copper hoards. The word 'hoard' conjures up an image of a collection of large number of items either of one type or miscellaneous tucked up in an undreamt of place to prevent them from being robbed. This expectation is not fulfilled in each and every instance of the copper implement find. Many of the so-called hoards either contain a few items or they are scattered over a small area. The compactness is thus lacking. The only find that qualifies to this name is probably the one found at Gungeria in Madhya Pradesh. It is also by far the largest in the hoards.

As early as 1905, several collections of copper implements were located mostly by accident, a characteristic feature of these finds. V.A. Smith in his 'The copper age and prehistoric bronze implements of India'[24] has pointed out, on the basis of the typology of these implements, a sort of interrelation in the collections scattered over a wide range. He has considered the collections from Rajpur in the Bijnor district, Mathurā, Mainpuri, Fathgarh, Niorai, Bithur, Pariar, Kosam, and one object each from Midnapur district, Bhagotoro in Karachi district and from Western Baluchistan.

The characteristic of copper-implements find is that the usual mounds associated with archaeological excavations are missing. These are, more often than not, found by the farmers while ploughing or discovered by shepherds as in the case of Gungeria. The element of chance has thus been predominant. In these circumstances stratigraphy or even in some cases the exact location of the find is unknown. In recent times efforts have been made to discover the stratigraphy of the copper implements. Indian archaeologists have succeeded in locating a hooked spearhead along with the ochre colour pottery at Saipai, in the state of Uttar Pradesh.[25] Here also initially a few copper implements were discovered while ploughing the field. An excavation carried on subsequently brought to light a harpoon. Considering the circumstances of the finds of these implements, it may be worthwhile to ask: Why are these implements found a few inches below the surface level? If they were found in fields which are ploughed every year, why have these not been discovered earlier? Would the shallow depths at which they were found, have something to do with their chronology? As for example, before a systematic excavation was carried on at Mitathal (Hissar dist. in Haryana), two copper harpoons, beads and Samudra Gupta's coins were the surface finds.[26] Subsequent excavations revealed two periods of occupation, the earlier one having affinities with Sothi culture and the later with the Harappan. The copper harpoons in this case may be either subsequent to Harappan occupation or they may be contemporary with Samudra Gupta's coins. In these uncertain conditions, it is difficult to reach any definite conclusion.

Archaeologists have tried to establish correlation between the copper implements and the material culture. Even at Saipai where one copper implement is said to be found in the stratified context with the OCP, the initial find has been accidental which was followed up by an excavation. However, the archaeologists appear to be associating the OCP with the copper implements. It is not yet clear whether the sites of copper implements found above the OCP may be treated as a group, probably signifying later development. Whereas the Gungeria hoard, the only collection which seems to have been really hoarded, stands separately. This hoard is also found in unstratified context. There are the copper implements in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab unaccompanied by any material culture, but having parallels in the west. The implements found with OCP too have parallels in the west. This really clinches the issue. Thus if the second group is taken to be the earliest indication of the existence of foreigners viz. the Aryans, in this area, naturally the copper implements in OCP context would occupy the latest position, the Gungeria hoard falling between these two. That is to say, the copper implements in the Doab having parallels in the west may be treated as the indications of the presence of the Aryans in the period before the destruction of Indus civilization. The Gungeria hoard may be placed just before the destruction (for which there is literary evidence) and the implements accompanied by the OCP context may come after the destruction of the Indus civilization.

It is well known that the finds of copper implements are spread over a vast area from Bengal to Baluchistan and Shalozan in the Kurram valley to Brahmagiri in the south. It may be asked whether all these are to be treated as of contemporary origin. As has been maintained by Gupta in his article on 'Indian Copper Hoards',[27] these finds may be conveniently treated in different groups, facilitating their dating. However, the hypothesis of the origin of the copper implements in the eastern zone the Zone A of his article and the spread of the industry in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab i.e. Zone B, as the second stage in the development and the finds in Peninsular or Southern and Western regions i.e. Zone X the third or latest stage may be disputed. This geographical division into zones is based on the characteristic shapes of the implements and no doubt introduces clarity into a chaotic situation. However, the reasons given for the origin and spread of the industry from Zone A to Zone B appear to be inadequate. The technical metallurgical details and analysis as given in the case of the anthropomorphic figure by B.B. Lal[28] may help in locating the source of the ore used and also in deciding the exact chronology.

The sites of implements found in Zone B are situated either in the Doab or on the east of Ganges. The variety of implements seems to be more than in Zone A. Besides the different varieties of celts, swords,

harpoons, dagger, rings and anthropomorphic figures are also found. Thus the distinctly martial aspect of the assemblage is completely lacking in the other zone. This along with the ambiguity about the structural remains even at the well-stratified excavation at Saipai seems to tell a different tale. Saipai might represent a rather developed stage in the civilization of the users of copper implements in this region.

Further, the swords and daggers found in these collections are typologically foreign to India which is suggested by their complete absence at Harappan sites or in the eastern zone. The antennae swords from the Fathgarh find are paralleled at Kallur which seems to belong to a later date. However, as has been noted above, according to Heine-Geldern they (the Fathgarh swords) are influenced by North Caucasian forms of the Koban culture which may be correct. Besides this the hilted sword at Rajanpur in Punjab may be compared with those of similar hilts from the Luristan graves of Persia, in Sialk Necropolis B, and in Caucasus.[29] The Itawa sword[30] may also find parallel forms in a sword of Tarsus (Asia Minor), Alishar Huyük and Caucasus spearhead handles,[31] all dated to between 2300 B.C.-2000 B.C. To this collection of swords may be added the Baharia sword which is also unparalleled anywhere.[32] Unlike any other sword the two sides develop into antennae and a part of the hilt curves like a hook. It may be possible that probably this is a spearhead rather than a sword, despite its length.[33] (Long spearheads are known from the regions mentioned above.) This may explain the purpose of the hook. Moreover a spearhead of a comparable shape is reported from Tell el Hesi and is described as "the unusual barbed spearhead with pronounced mid-rib" (pl. 5). It was found along with the crescent shaped tanged cutting axe-blade. Both probably date from 24th c. B.C. (Early Bronze).[34]

Parallel shapes seem to be the only possible criteria for these arms in the absence of accurate stratigraphic details and also other components of material culture. Most of the swords have resemblance to the family swords recorded from sites quite remote from the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab.

The copper rings which are found along with these copper implements resemble bangles with opening which is a type used even now especially in metals. The different sizes of the rings speak in favour of this use. The interlocking may be a convenient way of keeping them. Similar type of pattern made of the rings with openings is also reported from Alishar Huyük (Asia Minor) from a tomb which may be dated around 2300-2000 c. B.C.[35] From tomb no. 565 of Beshtasheni (Caucasus) where arrow and spearheads also occur[36] come two rings of similar type. The context in which they occur weakens the possibility of their use as bangles, unless they were an essential ornament worn by men too, as is *kaḍa* (bracelet) for the Sikhs.

But an alternative which suggests itself from two figs. 266 (Luristan) and 299 (Kvemo Sasirethi, Caucasus) of Schaeffer may supply the clue for its use. Fig. 299.11 is the axle of vehicle, most probably a chariot, which passes through the centres of the two wheels. It is stopped from coming out with a hook-like object which is held by the end of the axle made into a human hand like shape. Fig. 266.11 depicting a horse bit actually uses two rings. This use, if it is correctly interpreted, may also explain their inclusion in the hoards as they must have been of primary importance for the people constantly on the move. It is also significant that the usage should come from Luristan (1500-1200 B.C.), from Kvemo-Sasirethi (1300-100 B.C.) and Talyche (Persia, 1350-1200). These two localities are constantly associated with the finds in Gaṅgā-Yamunā basin (Fig. 3).

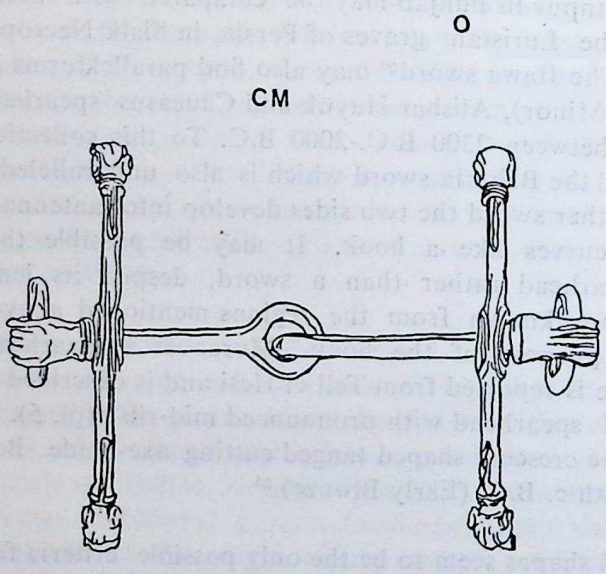


Fig. 3(i) The axle of the vehicle from Kvemo Sasirethi, Caucasus

The harpoons have no parallel anywhere either in the Harapppan collections or anywhere in the west of Harappa.

The different types of celts are found in the copper implements. They have been thought of as 'peculiar to India' but a similar object with somewhat pronounced shoulders, though not as much as in Smith's pl. V.7, is reported from Hissarlik-Troy.[37] The trunnion axe from Shalozan in the Kurram Valley, is a common form in the ancient world from Asia Minor (Tarsus, 2000 B.C. Middle Bronze II) to Persia. It is likely that the Shalozan trunnion axe travelled to the Kurram valley. The general comment of V.A. Smith on the flat celts is that they are 'extremely primitive in form closely imitating common stone models and

obviously referable to a period when metal was only beginning to supersede stone'.

This may give some clue to the antiquity of this form. In the western region, the flat celt is reported from Biblos (Lebanon) (2100-

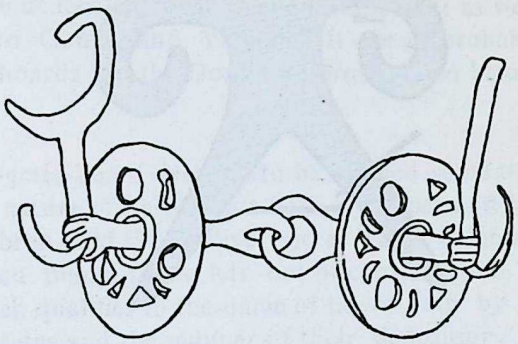


Fig. 3(ii) A horse bit from Luristan

1900),[38] Tell Brak (Syria) level IV (2200),[39] Tepe Gawra (Iraq) Bronze level VI (2200),[40] Jericho (Palestine) (Middle I—2000),[41] Tarsus (Asia Minor) (2100-1750),[42] Soli (Asia Minor) (2200-2100, 2000),[43] Boghazköy III (1500-1350)[44] (which very much resembles to the two specimens from Gungeria hoard; Smith, Ibid, pl. V, 4-5), and Caucasus (2000-1700).[45] Thus it may be surmised that these or very similar forms were probably in vogue between 2200 B.C.-1350 B.C. The localities as well as the dates fit in with those of the other members of these collections.

Another important object in the group of copper objects is the anthropomorphic figure (Fig. 4). It is reported from Bisauli, Fathgarh, Sheorajpur, and one broken round piece called as the anthropomorphic figure, from the late Harappan level of Lothal. It is disputed whether the last named item is an anthropomorphic figure. The two reasons being given are that the head of the Lothal specimen has a flat section, whereas the Doab anthropomorphs have a thickened head, with hammered top, and the accidental break of the arms so near the head would indicate rather straight and long arms, unlike the usual figure which has incurved arms. The anthropomorph has a thickened head as has been already pointed out, and the legs are left blunt.[46] The experiments conducted by Agrawal[47] are interesting. With the help of these, he has come to the conclusion that the weapon was meant for throwing like the boomerang. It seems that the object is really a weapon belonging to the same family as the crescent-shaped axe minus its shaft hole. The head lengthened into the crescent and the arms shortened into its ends. The elongated trunk when split into two provided the necessary

handle. In one piece were combined two weapons, a mace or something to give a blow with. If that failed, the sharpened arms did their job.

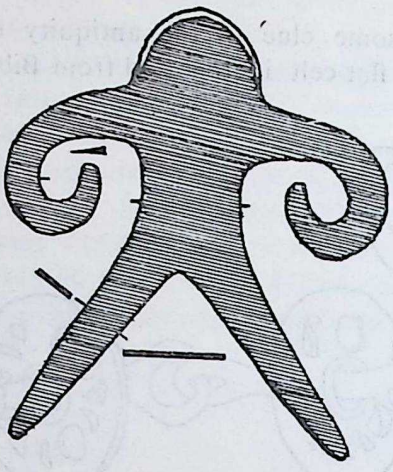


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Fig. 4 The 'anthropomorphic' implement from the copper hoards

The weapon might have been a product of the times when shaft-hole was not in extensive use. The users of the weapon may have acquired it in India as is evident from the metallic analysis given by Dr. B.B. Lal, the archaeological chemist of the Archaeological Survey of India: "The fact is significant as it shows, that the ore from which the metal was smelted was of Indian origin, the Indian copper ores have generally arsenic or nickel or both as impurities and these are considered the key elements in placing the source of the raw-material."[48] As has been suggested above, on the basis of the shape, the source seems to be for all practical purposes the Harappan civilization, which was technologically equipped for the production of such weapons. Although the rest of the weapons bear the unmistakable stamp of the western world, there is nothing comparable to this object.

Further, the evidence from the literary sources discussed above in Chap. III.8,9 suggests that the Vajra, thunderbolt, wielded by Indra was acquired through the good-offices of Uśanas Kāvya who was the purohita of the Asuras and also said to have been made by Tvaṣṭṛ which may be the later (distortion of) tradition. The acquisition of this weapon tilted the balance of victory in favour of the devas. Indra is said to have twirled round (*mathāyat, avartayaḥ*)[49] the head of Namucī, by whirling the thunderbolt at him which unmistakably indicates the use of a weapon which functioned when hurled at. It appears plausible that the anthropomorphic figure when held with one leg and hurled at should give a hard blow first and then cut with the two edges of the arms in passing, thus tearing the parts asunder.

If the identification of the anthropomorph with the thunderbolt is correct, these copper objects may be attributed to the Aryans who had by this time come in contact with the Asuras or had stayed at these sites after defeating the Asuras. It may be recollected that the devas had won their first victory over the asuras in the north-eastern region where these copper implements are found.[50] This should also explain the later choice of locality for permanent settlement as well as the sacredness attached to Gaṅgā and Yamunā. It seems probable that the so-called copper-hoards in the Doab are probably to be attributed to the Aryans.

The Gungeria-hoard deserves to be studied separately on account of the unique nature of its contents both of copper and silver. Not much attention has been paid to the silver-pieces which weigh about 80½ tolas and have been many times left out of consideration. This is the only collection which qualifies to the name of hoard both by the number of articles it contains and the manner of their deposition. The Gungeria-hoard contains in all 424 copper pieces and 102 silver pieces. The copper pieces are mainly the flat celts of a variety of shapes. There are also bar-celts. No two celts are alike. One of the bar-celts was serrated on both sides of the handle from which its saw-like use is inferred. The silver objects are of two classes 'bull's head' plates and discs. Both types are made of thin silver sheets, and some of them have simple rope ornament round the edge. Piggott thinks that these are paralleled in the stylized moufflons' heads in sheet-gold from Hissar III.[51] It seems that similar copper plates were sometimes used (in 1905) for the adornment of dedicated bulls or cows.[52] If the use of these discs is correct, it would mean that the users or depositors of the hoard had used the bull for drawing their carts and such other purposes and considered the animal with certain affection giving it a place of pride in their possessions. The second feature of the Gungeria hoard is the manner in which "the copper implements were packed in regular layers with the silver objects compacted together in a mass and lying to one side and it is clear that all the articles must have been enclosed in a wooden chest which had decayed completely".[53] Here are all the indications that these objects were hidden by somebody with a certain purpose. Unlike other finds, they were not found scattered.

There is every likelihood that the Gungeria hoard on account of the geographical position of Gungeria and the nature of the objects may be included in the eastern zone rather than in the Gangetic basin finds of similar nature. But the copper bar-celts cannot be derived from the stone bar-celts of the eastern zone as nowhere have both these types been found together. Moreover, the stone types are comparable with the south east Asian examples.[54] V.A. Smith gives the verdict in no unclear terms when he says: "The Gungeria deposit although buried in a

spot to the south of the Narbada is clearly associated by reason of its contents with Northern India and not with the South."[55] A technological difference between the eastern finds and the Gungeria hoard has also been pointed out by him. Gungeria copper objects bear unmistakable marks of hammering which led the discoverer to think that they have been hammered and not cast. But Smith thought that these instruments have been cast first and then finished by hammering. The Pachamba or Kasharbari finds leave no doubt that in Bengal roughly cast 'blooms' of copper were knocked into shape as celts by hammering. To him the articles from the finds in the Gangetic Basin and Gungeria are highly finished, made in regular moulds and merely finished with the hammer. The technology of these articles in general differs from that of Harappan. Probably the latter was more advanced than the former as is shown by the finish. As has been observed by Marshall, the objects from Mohenjo-daro do not bear any marks of hammering. The inference is that they might have been carefully rubbed down after hammering.[56] Marshall has noted, "... certain of the Gungeria implements resemble those of Mohenjo-daro, while others are entirely different in type. Some of the blade-axes of Mohenjo-daro have an incipient shoulder (Pl. CXXXVIII, 3 & 6, and Pl. CXXXIX, 3 & 4), a feature which is also found among the Bijnor and the Gungeria axes but is far more pronounced. This feature, however, is not confined to Indian weapons, for it is found in Hungary and Western Europe in both the Copper and Bronze Ages."[57]

The last important point about the Gungeria hoard is the place name Gungeria which, provided it has survived in tact all these centuries with but little phonetic changes, might even have been originally Gaṅgāriya i.e. the ariya (Ārya) from the Gaṅgā.

All this may be considered as indirect evidence for attributing the hoard and other finds of copper implements to the migrating Aryans. A systematic excavation at the site where the hoard was originally found determined the material culture to which the hoard belonged. It is not unlikely that the site may not yield anything at all which may mean that the Aryans had chosen a spot in a secluded area away from their camp.

The literary evidence supports this hypothesis. In Chapter III.7 where the Viṣṇu-saga is discussed, the manner in which the Aryans (the devas) came to possess a small patch of land on which they set up a small tent or shed has been noted.[58] What is referred there as sacrifice was the daily life of the Aryans which later transformed into a religious rite. As a good example of this transformation, ŚB I.1.2.3-9 is cited below which will serve to give some idea of their way of life as well as the process of transformation of a mundane act into a religious rite.

"3. For the gods, when they were performing the sacrifice, were afraid

of a disturbance on the part of the Asuras and Rakṣas: by this means he expels from here, at the very opening of the sacrifice, the evil spirits, the Rakṣas. 4. He now steps forward (to the cart) with the text (Vaj.S. I.7C): 'I move along the wide aerial realm.' For the Rakṣas roams about in the air, rootless and unfettered in both directions (below and above); and in order that this man (the Adhvaryu) may move about the air, rootless and unfettered in both directions, he by this very prayer renders the atmosphere free from danger and evil spirits. 5. It is from the cart that he should take (the rice required for the sacrifice). For at first the cart (is the receptacle of the rice) and afterwards this hall; and because he thinks 'what was at first (in the cart, and hence still unimpaired by entering the house-holders abode) that will I operate upon'; for that reason let him take (rice) from the cart. 6. ... 7. The cart further is (one of the means of) the sacrifice; for the cart is indeed (one of the means of) sacrifice. To the cart, therefore refer, the (following) Yajus-texts, and not to a store-room nor to a jar. The Rishis, it is true, once took the rice from a leathern bag and hence in the case of the Rishis, the Yajus-texts applied to a leathern bag..." The translator has added a footnote to § 4: "The cart containing the rice or barley or whatever material is used instead, stands behind (i.e. west of) the Gārhapatya, fitted with all its appliances (except the oxen). Katya Śr. II, 3, 12..." On the next page is another footnote where he explains the meaning of *havirdhāna*. "9. (Like) fire, verily, is the yoke of that very cart; for the yoke is indeed (like) fire; hence the shoulder of those (oxen) that draw this (cart) becomes as if burnt by fire. The middle part of the pole behind the prop represents, as it were, its (the cart's) altar; and the enclosed space of the cart (which contains the rice) constitutes its *havirdhānam* (receptacle of the sacrificial food)."

The *havirdhāna* is explained by the translator as: "The *havirdhāna* (*maṇḍapa*) is a temporary shed or tent erected on the sacrificial ground for performance of the soma-sacrifice, in which two carts containing the soma-plants are placed. These carts themselves, however, are also called *havirdhāna*."[59]

Thus the sacrifice was really the day-to-day activities of the Aryans which were hindered by the asuras and the rakṣas. The Aryans were travelling in carts in which they stored the rice grains in leather bags. The carts were obviously drawn by the oxen. This supports the conjecture made above in the context of the silver bulls' heads and also explodes the myth of the Aryans travelling in horse-driven carriages or on horse-back. Sometimes they lived in the carts, which is indicated by identifying the cart with sacrifice, and also by its identity with *havirdhāna*, a temporary shed. At one stage, in the sacrifice, a sword (*sphya*) is passed under a jar. The translator's comments are: "The *sphya* is a straight sword (*khaḍga*) or knife, a cubit long, carved out of *khadirā*

wood (Mimosa Catechu)... It is used for various purposes calculated to symbolically insure the safe and undisturbed performance of the sacrifice." This sword reminds one of those found in the Gangetic basin.

In ŚB I.2.5.14-19 is described the construction of the altar. It is the same place where Viṣṇu was enclosed. He (the sacrificer) measures the space and cleans it. The next instruction in § 17 is intriguing: 'For this reason he sweeps the loose soil to the south side.' It is not clear from where the loose soil comes. The beginning of § 18 says: 'He (the *Āgnidhra*) smooths it down (from east to west)' which is followed by a narrative. "The gods, namely, when they were preparing for the contest, said to one another: 'Come let us remove to the moon for safety what imperishable place of worship there is on this earth, so that if the Asuras, on vanquishing us, should drive us away from here, we may afterwards, by praising and mortifying, prevail again!' They accordingly removed to the moon what imperishable place of worship there was on this earth... It is in this place of worship also that his sacrifice is performed: for that reason he smooths (the altar) down. (19) He smooths it down with the text (Vaj.S. I.28): 'Before the bloody (battle) with its rushings hither and thither O mighty one!' The bloody one no doubt is the battle, for in battle bloody deeds are done, and slain lie man and horse, and before that battle they removed it (the altar to the moon); therefore he says 'Before the bloody...etc.—'lifting up the life-bestowing earth' for after lifting up what was living on this earth, they removed it to the moon..."

Thus the smoothening down of the altar which is not clearly explained seems to be the digging of a pit of the given measurements which is indicated by—"Before the bloody battle with its rushings, hither and thither, *lifting up the life-bestowing earth*" in which are deposited the imperishable place of worship i.e. the contents of the cart which has been the sacrificial shed. The ground was dug for depositing the articles inside and that is why it is smoothened and covered with rubbish (§ 17) to camouflage it and also sprinkled with water (§ 20). It seems plausible that the Gungeria was the imperishable place of worship and the implements, the earthly possessions of the devas. This gives some idea of the mentality of the Aryans. The idea of burying the imperishable possessions in order to prevent them from falling into enemies' hands was not alien to them, and probably the Gungeria hoard did belong to them.

Just as Gungeria hoard was probably the imperishable place of worship, similarly by the patch of land on which Viṣṇu was laid down was probably the first settlement of the Aryans, where there was no disturbance from the eastern side. It has also been noted above that their

first victory was won in the north-eastern direction. Later it came to be known as *aparājitā*, unvanquished. This, along with the subsequent importance assumed by the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā in the Aryan culture may provide us the missing clue for the early Aryan culture in India as well as their route of movements in India before the defeat of the Harappans and also their whereabouts in the post-Harappan days.

The validity of literary sources may be examined in the light of the available archaeological material in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab. A part of the material in the form of the copper hoards has been already discussed and henceforth the remains of the material culture found in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab will be examined. In examining this material, the aim will be to see if any chronological relation between the Harappan culture of the Indus river system and the later cultures can be established. If this could be done, it will automatically accomplish two ends, viz. the theory of the Aryans having settled on the ruins of the earlier (i.e. Harappan) culture will be disproved and secondly, it will give us some idea of the route of Aryan migration, establishing the link between the earlier and later cultures.

As has been mentioned above, in a recent excavation at Saipai, the correspondence between the Ochre Coloured pottery (OCP) and the copper implements has been established. This OCP has been found at several sites in the Upper Doab in Uttar Pradesh. Out of them the findings at Bargaon[60] and Ambkheri[61] are of direct interest for the present discussion. At Bargaon (District Saharanpur) was found 1 metre thick occupational deposit yielding Harappan ware along with the unslipped Ochre Coloured ware. Also here was found the ill-fired slipped Ochre Coloured pottery. The principal shapes of the Harappan and the unslipped ware are: The dish on stand, bowl with featureless rim, lid with central knob, Indus goblet, ring stand, miniature pedestalled cup, long-necked globular flask and vase with chord impressed designs and incised bands on the exterior. Some of the pottery was also painted, the designs being confined to cross-hatched triangles set within horizontal bands and wavy lines in upper levels and only horizontal bands in the lower levels. Typical Harappan pottery was also found. Amongst other finds are enumerated a chert blade, a variety of terracotta cakes, a bone point, terracotta wheel of a toy-cart with the central hub, stone weight, terracotta and faience bangle pieces. R.C. Gaur has analysed the material, rather neatly, into three successive levels called Lower, Middle and Upper. He has called the Lower level as 'dominated by Harappan pottery types'. In the Middle level he sees an overlap of Harappan and OCP shapes. The Upper level is mainly represented by the OCP industry. Difference between lower and middle is said to be not very distinct. M.N. Deshpande, the excavator of Bargaon, sees

cemetery H influence in the shapes and paintings of the upper levels. He classifies the site as Late Harappan.

The other site viz. Ambkheri 2 is also in Saharanpur district. Here a single culture occupational deposit of OCP has been excavated in 13 trenches. The pottery has been distinguished in two types: thick and thin fabric wares. Types in the thick ware have been described as large trough, bowl-like lid with central knob, dish-on-stand, vase with flanged rim and oval body, ring-stand, basin with undercut rim and vase with chord-design, mat-impression and horizontal raised bands on the exterior. Thin fabric ware types have been described as long-necked flask with flaring rim and flat base, lid with central knob, bowl with slightly out-turned rim and bulbous body, and miniature cup and vase. Another ware of washed grey colour in thick, thin and medium fabric was associated with the OCP. This had limited shapes viz. pedestalled miniature cup and vase. Other articles found are a carnelian bead, terracotta objects like cart-wheel with a central hub, animal figurines including humped bull, a fragmentary cake with oval depressions, stone saddle-querns with pestles, remains of a brick kiln and a hearth. The excavator classifies the site as 'a degenerate phase of Harappa culture and as such provides an important link in bridging the gap between the Harappan and Painted Grey Ware cultures'.

It seems that the material found at the two sites of Bargaon and Ambkheri represents an important transitional phase. Bargaon material incorporates in itself the typical Harappan pottery with black design on red surface which may be taken as a link with the mature Harappan culture and as such the site may be treated as a Harappan settlement along with Rupar and Alamgirpur. These sites may be considered the eastern extension of the Indus phenomenon. It is significant that the OCP in both unslipped and slipped form occurs at this site side by side with the Harappan ware. It seems that this might be one of the earliest places where some folk besides the Harappans stayed. Surprisingly, no traces of structures have been found associated either with the Harappan pottery level or in subsequent levels. This may mean that even Harappan settlement had not been there for a long enough period or that the material used for houses was of perishable nature. The third alternative could be that the settlement being on the bank of a river, the structures might be similar to those noticed by N.G. Majumdar on Lake Manchchar. The Bargaon pottery of the lower level viz. the Harappan type represents the Harappans as the dominant group. The middle level represents the time when a new folk came into the land and probably were using the locally made, though inferior, pottery. This explains the overlap of Harappan and OCP shapes. The upper level represents the post-defeat period when the power had passed into the hands of the new folk. To this phase also belongs the Ambkheri material in which the

Harappan shaped pottery has obtained the Ochre Colour. Most of the shapes and other cultural items are those obtained in mature Harappan assemblage. These two sites may be considered to be the representatives of the transitional phase reflecting the struggle between the Harappans and the new folk and also the passing of power into the hands of the newly arrived ones. The change of the pottery colour is a pointer to this. As already noted, at the site of Saipai in stratified context the OCP is found associated with copper implements. These as already discussed have parallels outside India. The indications are that OCP is some way connected with the people who had come from outside India and such people at this particular juncture were the Aryans. Besides, the ochre pigment seems to have been associated with the urnfield burials which are attributed to the Aryans outside India. Considering the importance of this colour in later Hindu culture, the colour of the pottery may not be a mere accident. These two assemblages do satisfy to a large extent the necessary conditions of their being a joint work of the Harappans and the later folk who came from outside India. The available literary material suggests that the new-comers were the Aryans. OCP is the only ware which is related to the copper hoards on the one hand and Late Harappan culture on the other.

The question is: Was this the kingdom to which Indra invited Varuṇa to rule? Did the officials of Varuṇa's government become nomads with the Aryans? What was their fate? Most of the red ware sites are basically OCP group sites showing no trace of structures, indicating nomadic way of life. With the brick-kiln found at Ambkheri, the possibility of structures may not be completely ruled out.

3. Gaṅgā and the route of Aryan migration

The distribution of the copper implements is suggestive of the route the Aryans may have taken. They probably entered through the northern passes as the finds in the Kurram valley suggest. After crossing the Indus and its tributaries, they obtained a foothold on the eastern side from the Asuras, but were constantly troubled by the attacks of the Asuras and the Rakṣas. They probably travelled through the Gangetic basin which is borne out by the archaeological evidence. Probably from the southern region, north of Narmada they made a final attack on the Asuras. In this last battle extensive use of fire was made especially on the northern side in order that the Asuras should not escape. This has been already discussed above (in Chapter III.11). From the south they went on pressing them and gradually advancing north-westwards may have reached various townships of the Indus civilization which had already suffered heavy damages caused by the untimely floods due to the release of the dammed waters of the five rivers. The three

traverses of Viṣṇu were used to collect information of the weak points of the Indus administration. After this a strategy was essential. The first step was to sow seeds of dissension amongst the Asuras. After winning over the priest Uśanas, Indra acquired the thunderbolt, probably the anthropomorphic figure of the hoards and killed Vṛtra which gave him the control of the dam. Untimely release of dam water destroyed most of the agriculture and the towns located on the southern banks of the Indus and besides creating a sense of insecurity in the people dealt a severe blow to the administration. But still population of the cities had not started fleeing which might have happened only after the last battle, when the Aryans entered the town.

The traces of the Aryans in Mohenjo-daro and Chanhu-daro-Jhukar phase are supposed to be found in the form of a pin, an axe-adze and a shaft-hole axe. The deer-topped pin found at Mohenjo-daro[62] and the pins from Chanhu-daro[63] may probably be classed together. Shorter pins with rolled head are also reported from Chanhu-daro-Harappa phase. Because of the length and the pattern of head, they might have been used as hair-pins. More ornamental types are current in silver even now. Mackay's inference based on the statue head found at Mohenjo-daro is, however, to be disputed as the pins cannot be worn on the outside. This longer type of pin with a decorated head has a very ancient history and a vast distribution from Asia Minor to Indus valley. It is located at Koban (Caucasus) around 1550-1400 B.C.,[64] Sachkhere (Caucasus) about 2000-1700 B.C.,[65] Luristan (Persia) (records smaller pins with similar designs at the top which are comparable to those of more ancient origin in Talyche 2100-1900 B.C.),[66] Veri (Russian Talyche or Lenkoran) (three pins and smaller ones) 1450-1200,[67] Alishar Hüyük II from tombs (Asia Minor) 1900-1700.[68] From Alaça Hüyük is reported a rod with a single deer-top which greatly resembles the Mohenjo-daro deer-pin. Probably it was a common and popular motif.[69] Hissarlik-Troy records a pin exactly similar to the single-spiral topped pin from Mohenjo-daro.[70] In all this one flaw remains and that is, that the pin comes from the lower levels of DK Area G. But, considering the vague stratigraphy of the excavation, combined with the scarcity of similar items, there are chances that the item might have fallen down. If it really occurs in the stratified Harappan context, it may be considered as an imported exotic article from one of the areas mentioned above and would establish the trade or other contacts. Assuming that the location of the pin in the lower levels was only by accident, such pins may be looked for elsewhere too. However, no such finds are reported from anywhere else, especially from the Doab region. To be considered as a piece of evidence for the presence of foreigners in the area, it seems to be too inadequate. Although it might be a piece of foreign origin, the circumstances in which it came to Indus valley appear to be uncertain.

The axe-adze from Mohenjo-daro and the shaft-hole axe from Chanhu-daro-Jhukar phase are both exotic articles but the type is quite common at Hissar III, Shah Tepe and Turang Tepe. This type survived at other sites (e.g. Assur and in the B Cemetery at Sialk) probably as late as 9th c. B.C. Thus once again the evidence points to the middle east.

Barring these few items, not much evidence is available on the Harappan sites themselves to suggest the presence of the Aryans in the Indus valley. However, it is obvious from Ṛgvedic narratives that the events described in them have taken place on the banks of Indus and its tributaries. It is of interest to note that the river Gaṅgā whose waters can wash away all the sins of a Hindu and the death on its banks can lead one to heaven is mentioned but once in Ṛgveda in Nadi-Stutī[71] which may be of late date. In the Śrautasūtras too the rivers occupy an important place in the ritual. This may apparently mean that the Aryans were well acquainted with the Indus valley. But the Gaṅgā did not occupy as important a place in their lives. Why did the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā become so sacred later? The answer lies in the first victory in the north-east that the devas secured over the asuras. A remembrance of the victory may have been one of the causes. Fertile land suitable for agriculture may have dominated the choice of the site for settled life. They could not settle on the sites earlier occupied by the Harappans because they were still occupied, being unsafe for Aryan habitation. However, no opposition to their peaceful settlement in the country was expected. People might have deserted the sites for some time, but that they did return to occupy their houses is reflected in the squatter-houses and cemetery H, the latter being a few years removed from the Harappans.

The route of Aryan migration might have been as follows: They entered India through the north-west crossing the Indus and its tributaries around Rupar. They travelled through the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab where they met with continuous opposition from the Asuras and the Rakṣas and probably escaped towards the south. After collecting necessary information about the weak points of Asuras they attacked the Indus empire. It is not unlikely that after the cities were flooded several times after the death of Vṛtra, Indra assumed the rulership along with Varuṇa. However, the government could not return to its original efficient organization and administration probably because the system collapsed owing to the desertion of officials and certain sections of citizens alike and also probably the failure to train new officers from among the new-comers to man the administration. The marked decline of the civic standards meticulously observed in the earlier phases of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa may be attributed to this. If the Aryans did live along with the remnants of the Harappan population which goes

against the evidence, they have not left any special artefacts except few doubtful ones. As is clear from the artefacts, the late phase also yielded pottery of the Harappan type, though of an inferior quality.

4. Some Harappan sites

Burrow has shown that the place described as Vailasthāna and Mohenjo-daro may be identical. It is not however clear whether Vailasthāna was used as a common noun or proper name. However, from Sāyaṇa's gloss on Vailasthāna and the meaning of Mohenjo-daro in Sindhi, it appears that the latter might have been derived from a tradition embodied in the older word. Attempts have been made to relate Mohenjo-daro with the Nārmiṇi *puram*.[72] But little is known about this fortress, except that it was illumined, was shining (i.e. burnt) with fire (agni). Ūrjayanti[73] appears to be the name of a city which was made freely accessible by Indra. Probably Nārman was defending this fortress.

Some archaeologists and historians identify Harappa with Hariyūpīyā on the basis of the implied linguistic similarity. The assumption is that the locality has preserved its name through the millennia and that the Sanskrit name was there before the Aryan advent in India or, more precisely, soon after their arrival in India, the Aryan migrants started giving their own names to the rivers. Harappa, as used now, is a place-name whereas in ṚV where Hariyūpīyā appears once,[74] it is, as treated by Hillebrandt[75] and Geldner,[76] the name of a river. The feminine gender and the etymological consideration may have been the bases of this interpretation. Moreover, it is not called a *pura* by the Vedic poet, as is usually the case when *puras* are mentioned. Hillebrandt identifies Hariyūpīyā with the Iryab (Haliab), a tributary of the Kurram—Vedic, Krumū—river. Yavyāvatī which is mentioned in the next verse in connection with the defeat of Vṛcīvat is identified with Zhob. Linguistically both identifications seem possible and it is more likely that Hariyūpīyā is a name of a river rather than a fortress. Geographically speaking, both the rivers are in the same region. It is probable that the clan of Vṛcīvat which was located in this region suffered defeat twice at the hands of Indra. If a clan is located in a region, it is but natural for it to make preparations for a second battle in the same or adjoining region. Thus in the identification of Hariyūpīyā with Harappa some problems still remain.

Although the place-names Harappa and Mohenjo-daro do not yield any direct clues to the correlation of the Asura kingdoms and the Indus civilization, there are some minor sites which still preserve their names, probably given in the post-Harappan days. Amongst such sites may be cited Koṭāsura,[77] by far the most uniquely preserved place-name,

meaning the Asura-fortress. It is identified as a site of Indus civilization, situated to the north-east of Mohenjo-daro, on the right bank of dry Nara, by M.S. Vats. Well-executed pipal tree motif has been reported by Vats. However, he has also noticed pottery of the cemetery H type at this site. Lack of excavation conducted at this site prevents from drawing any conclusions about the stratigraphy of the Harappan and cemetery H cultures.

Amongst the more recent archaeological discoveries, the site of Sur-koṭaḍā seems to be significant.[78] Probably the original name which might have been Asura-koṭaḍā has been changed to Sur-koṭaḍā because of demoniac associations. The settlement is typical Harappan including the citadel. In fact, most of the Harappan sites are known after the citadel, for example, Koṭaḍā in Khavada and Koṭaḍi in Khadir in the Greater Rann of Kutch.[79] Shorkot may be cited among other possible sites. It is not very far from Harappa and is described by Cunningham at length. According to legend, the destruction of Harappa and Shorkot is attributed to a king from the west. But the significant point is the use of large sized bricks for the wall surrounding the mound which, according to Cunningham, is a sure sign of antiquity.[80] It seems plausible that the name Surat, later sanskritized into Surāṣṭra and Saurāṣṭra might also have had asura-affinities, which seems to be verified by large number of Harappan sites in that area.

N.G. Majumdar visited another site called Kandarwaro-daro, though it has not been identified as Indus site.[81] However, the name of the site seems to bear close resemblance to the term gandharva.

There is a certain amount of direct evidence to connect the archaeological remains of the Indus civilization with the Asura-towns etc. destroyed by the Aryans, and described by their poets in the compositions brought together in Ṛgveda. In fact, these battles between the Asuras and others on the one hand and the Aryans on the other formed the basis of the latter's religion, the rites of which are described in the Brāhmaṇas and related literature. The ritualistic religion described in these texts may be called Brahmanism.

XI

1. Introductory

In this chapter, the archaeological material and the conclusions reached above on the basis of the literary material are correlated. The archaeological material deals with the material culture of a people. This situation may change substantially if written records are also found. However, literary material when compared to the artefacts of material life is undoubtedly a richer source of information. It can reflect the totality of human life in its tangible and intangible aspects. The archaeologist's emphasis on the material culture consisting of structures, pottery, and objects of various metals may not be found in the literary sources in general. Fortunately, in this particular case, broad indications of material life are found in the literary sources too. As mentioned above, wherever possible, the sequence in which the literary material is discussed is followed here for the sake of convenience.

2. The symbol of Asura

The symbols appearing in the rich Harappan repertoire of seals are correlated to those appearing in Ṛgveda and Assyrian mythology. In certain places, movement of the symbols in later Indian tradition is pointed out accompanied by the analysis of related factors.

The god Asura was called the Bull who gave birth to the rest of the creation. As a solar divinity, he was associated with the disc of sun and a bird which crossed the sky every day. The symbol of (Ass.) Ashura is the winged solar disc a synthesis of the two symbols (Fig. 5, i-viii). The divinity appears in the centre and the feathery tail of the bird covers his legs and feet. He faces east and points in that direction with his hand. This later anthropomorphic depiction is not found at any of the Harappan sites, but a seal bearing an eagle with open feathers and two serpents near its head is discovered at Harappa.[1] The two wings spread on two sides are hatched and in the centre are two horizontal lines probably the stylized depiction of the bird's legs. This probably is the nearest to the later symbol of the god Ashura and Ahura-Mazda. In all probability it signified the highest authority in the Harappan empire. This is further emphasized by the regularity of the design of the seal. The scarcity of the motif is probably the testimony of its importance. Behind the seal

is a cross with vertical and horizontal hatches and the triangles on the four sides of the cross are filled with elevated triangles. Many Harappan sites have yielded similar eagle-seals which are less stylized in design. For example, at Mohenjo-daro[2] is found a circular seal described as amulet, with an elephant and three pictograms on one side and an eagle on the other. Seals bearing identical motifs along with the pictograms are also reported from the lower levels. As noted above, what is called a Jhukar amulet from Chanhu-daro resembles the Harappan seal more than the Mohenjo-daro specimen, in the sense that on the other side it has a cross.[3] Seals bearing a similar eagle are found at Tepe Yahya IVC[4] and in Namazga V.[5] Seals and sealings are reported from Kalibangan and Lothal from the Harappan levels. The detailed reports, however, are awaited (Plates 6, 7, 8 & Fig. 6).

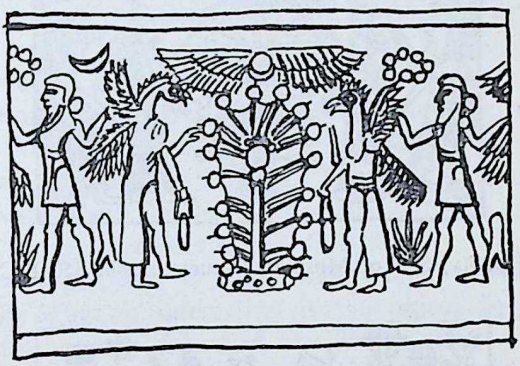

Fig. 5(i) Winged sun-disc, stylized tree and genii, 13th-10th c. B.C.

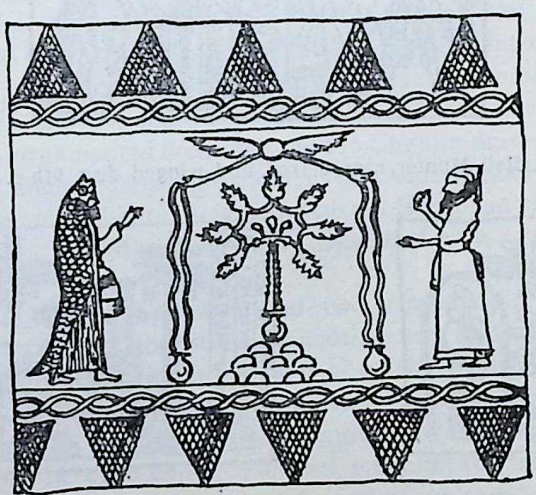

Fig. 5(ii) The winged sun-disc and the tree symbolising Ashur giving rain, end of 2nd millennium B.C.

Fig. 5(iii) Priests, winged disc, sacred tree and gazelle, 9th c. B.C.

Fig. 5(iv) Assyrian seal, Belit & dawn symbols of Marduk and Nabu, 9th c. B.C.

Fig. 5(v) Seal of Mushesh-Ninurta, about 850 B.C.

Fig. 5(vi) Hunter, sacred tree, and winged disc, 9th c. B.C.

Fig. 5(vii) King's stelae depicting Ashur in sun-disc, 750 B.C.-650 B.C.

Fig. 5(viii) Seal of Darius the great, Achaemenian period

Here attention may be drawn to the winged disc and the cross found associated with a solar god of Hittite origin. Amongst the figurines found in the 'Golden Tomb' of the North-West Fort of Carchemish are three figurines which stylistically seem to bear Assyrian influence. They are found in a grave of 7th c. B.C. 'These little figures are the jeweller's reproduction of the great rock-cut reliefs of Yazilikaya. Not only the general subject is the same—a long array of gods, royalties, and soldiers—but the individual figures are identical in type, in attitude, in attribute, and in dress.' The rock carvings belong to the 13th c. B.C. whereas the Carchemish jewellery belongs to a 7th c. B.C. grave. To Woolley it represents the Hittite tradition unbroken. Two of the figurines represent a god who is described as 'a god wearing on his head the winged disc with the cruciform rays and the long tunic and cloak one end of which passes over the left shoulder to fall down in front of the body which covers the right arm to below elbow; both tunic and cloak are heavily fringed. The god is beardless. He faces right; in his right hand he bears the carved lituus, his left hand is advanced and holds an object rather like ankh'[5a] (Fig. 7). Obviously, the god is a sun-god and is some way related to Ashur, if he is not Ashur himself. What is interesting is the object he holds. This has resemblance to the cross found in the Indus valley frequently. It is closely connected with the eagle too. In fact, the depiction of the god resembles closely to that of Ahura Mazda found at Persepolis. Besides the figurines, there is found at the top of a Hittite inscription[5b] a depiction of a winged disc. At its centre is found a motif which is often seen on the Indus seals and is generally described as the compartmented design (Plate 9, a-c). The significance of the motif becomes clear in association with this solar symbol (Fig. 8). A more decorative form of the same design which is basically an ornamented cross, is found in Chanhu-daro (Plate 9d). The cross by itself might be a simplified form of a star symbol which in early writing represented divinity. It is found on the Harappan sites in a simple form (Plate 10 a, b) and was probably associated with sun.

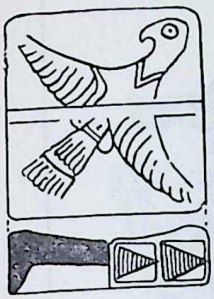

Fig. 6 The eagle seal from Tepe Yahya

The seal bearing an eagle and two serpents on the sides may possibly be related to the scene on another seal in which two cobras with raised heads are sitting on the side of a deity, sitting cross-legged on a platform.[6] This may further be compared with a scene on a steatite vase from Khafaje[7] where a human figure standing on two lionesses is holding a cobra in each hand. Another scene on the same vase depicts a humped bull of the Brahmani type behind which stands a male figure with long hair and wearing a kilt. It is grasping two sinuous objects, representing water in a continuous stream.

The first scene is reminiscent of the fight between the Babylonian god Marduk and the dragon Tiamat, from which Marduk emerges

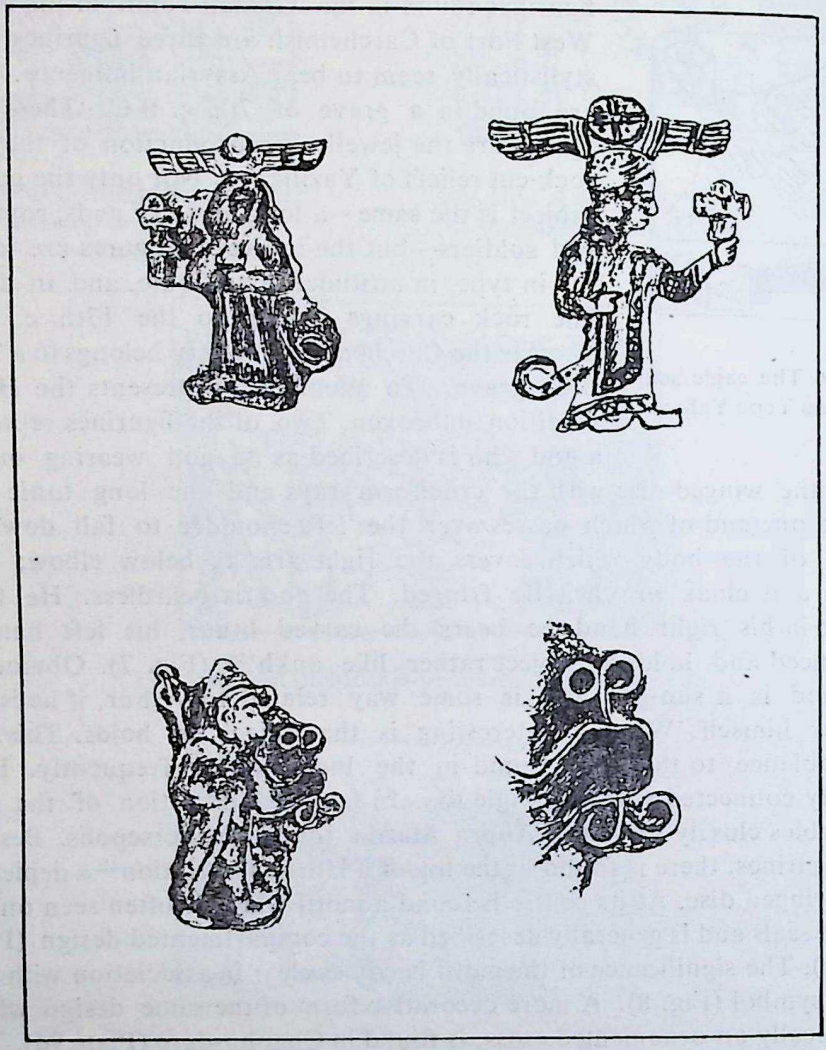

Fig. 7 Funerary figures from Carchemish

successful. This myth was later adopted by almost all the ancient peoples in West Asia in which their chief god killed the dragon. In fact, the same myth is associated with Kṛṣṇa in Hindu mythology who is said to have subdued the serpent king Kālia in the river Yamunā. The Indus seal with the two serpents on the two sides of the human figure may be the depiction of the god Asura, who is anthropomorphised. An Elamite depiction of the same myth may be seen on two seals in Luristan (Figs. 9, 10).

Fig. 8 The winged disc at the top of an inscription found in Carchemish

The second scene is reminiscent of a plaque of Ashur found at Assur where the god is shown with the branches issuing from him

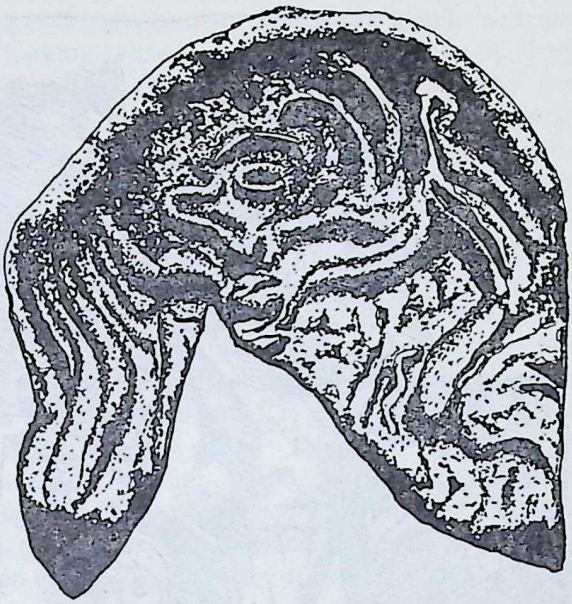

Fig. 9 A seal from Luristan (Susa I)

and at the bottom are two figures holding two vases or jugs (?) from which the water is seen issuing (Fig. 11). Even at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, a human figure or sometimes only head depicted in a tree is of frequent occurrence (Plate 11). This may be compared with the depiction on the Ashur-plaque, and may find a parallel in a cylinder seal found at Tepe Yahya on which the figures of a male and a female are engraved. The male is surrounded by the heads of the corn or branches of a tree. They seem to be issuing forth from his body. Below the bust appear angular curves. This seal and a duplicate were found in Period IVB dated about 3280 ± 170 B.C. and 3245 ± 465. The steatite vase referred to above dates about 2700-2500 B.C. Recent researches at Tepe Yahya the centre of the steatite vase industry may help to date it precisely. These vases are spread over very large area from the Tigris-Euphrates to the Indus.

Fig. 10 Another seal from Luristan (Susa I)

Thus the concept of a godhead, closely resembling to that of god Asura as the fertility god, may go back to the end of the 4th millennium B.C.[8]

Fig. 11 A gypsum plaque of a male-god found at Assur

The tree on the seals and sealings of the Harappan culture surrounding Asura can be distinguished by its characteristic leaves as the pipal tree which grows wild in India (Plate 11). This may be considered as a development in India as it is not found outside India, though tree or the ears of corn are always present probably as a symbol of vegetational fertility. With this association of the pipal tree, it may now be easier to understand the frequent appearance of the pipal leaves and branches in the pottery paintings throughout the Harappan sites and also outside. In fact, as has been suggested by R.F.S. Starr in his work on 'the Indus painted pottery',[9] it may be proper to treat the appearance of this motif outside the Indus valley as a sign of its cultural and probably political influence.

Further a seal (Plate 12), an isolated find, matched outside the Indus valley only by a possible conceptual similarity, on which is depicted the pipal tree with its branches and at its trunk are two heads of the urus on each side, turned towards the trunk and probably supposed to be looking at the two small round fruits of the pipal may be related to this group.[10] What is important is that they are looking at the fruits and not eating them. The tree probably depicts the cosmos and the two urus heads, the double order—cosmic and moral.[11] This same motif in a slightly modified form is found at Boghazköy where one of the birds sitting on the tree is eating the fruit, while the other is looking on.[12] In this context may be mentioned the Ṛgvedic verses I.164.20-22, which seem to explain the motif. The two eagles are sitting on a pipal tree. One of them is eating the berries, whereas the other is looking on. The one who eats the berries, he nests and breeds but does not know the Father. The other who looks on invokes for the share in the immortal, in the wisdom which is the mighty protector of the whole world and wherein the wise enter. The exact implications of the depiction are ponderable, though it is not difficult to see the synthesis of the two symbols probably of the same divinity. The pipal tree and the *suparṇa* are the two symbols associated with Asura. The tree is the cosmic tree on which sit the two birds, one representing mortals who eat the fruit growing on this but know not the matrix (the Father i.e. Asura) behind it. The other does not eat it but aspires to be immortal through abstenance. The tree probably represents the cosmic ignorance and its fruits lead to further ignorance. Throughout the later tradition the pipal tree retained the sanctity attached to it.

A seal (Plate 13) found at Mohenjo-daro bearing what Mackay thinks is the depiction of a solar motif with the head of the animal described as the unicorn or the buffalo. The remarks of Mackay are worth noting: "The urus-like animal or more probably the divinity of which this animal was a symbol, may have been a solar deity, if we accept as the sun-disc, the curious object with rays seen on seal 641 and in Pl. C (G), in which the head of this beast takes the place of the sixth ray. If we conclude that this motif represents the sun, it is of considerable importance, for with the exceptions of some doubtful representations on painted pottery (Pl. LXVIII.21, 24) neither the sun nor stars appear anywhere in the art of the ancient Indus valley, though such devices frequently occur on the early seals and painted pottery of Sumer and Elam. Nowhere else have I been able to find any pictured representation of an animal so intimately connected with the sun-disc as on this seal, and the peculiarly shaped disc itself without the animal is very rarely seen... The sun is also represented in a somewhat similar manner on a pottery seal from Kish, and on similar seals from Susa."[13] Mackay's interpretation of the symbol admirably fits in with the hypothesis put forth here. And in fact going a step further, it may be

possible to connect the solar motif on the pottery of mature Harappan phase at Mohenjo-daro with the cemetery H motif painted on the pottery. In their better days and during strict administrative control the Harappans were not altogether unacquainted with the depictions of the celestial bodies on the pottery. This became one of the common motifs, especially of the grave-ware, at a later stage. The rarity of the solar disc seal may suggest a certain amount of administrative control on using these motifs for more mundane purposes. The weakening of authority and less standardization may be indicated by the frequent appearance of the motif. Another seal which might have similar symbolic meaning is the one on which is depicted the solar motif of the six heads of the urus-like animal (Plate 10c). In fact, the three-headed urus may be suggestive of similar symbolism embedded in it.

The various symbols associated with the disc of sun are worth noting as their depictions in the Indus civilization may be related to a solar divinity probably god Asura. The wheel associated with sun, representing the round disc of the sun with the rays spreading circularly is mentioned in several places in ṚV (see below Chapter XII.7). Later during historical times this wheel became one of the most important religious symbols and as such has a continuous history.

Its depictions in the Indus civilization are numerous and varied. First type consists of realistic depictions of sun which is drawn with various linear rays going in different directions from a central circle. Such depictions are found on Harappan painted pottery e.g. Harappa—pl. LXVII.15,22; pl. LXVIII.55,63,65,72,76,82, pl. LXIX.17; Mohenjo-daro (Marshall, vol. III)—pl. LXXXVII.6; pl. LXXXVIII.7, pl. XCI, 13,15,16; pl. XCII.24; (Mackay, vol. II) pl. LXVIII.21,24. Amongst incised designs found at Mohenjo-daro some of the most beautiful ones have the solar pattern delicately itched, for example, Mackay, vol. II, pl. LXVII.18,19,22,23,27 (and probably 25); also Marshall; vol. III, pl. CLVII.1. The sun-motif is also depicted with a kidney-bean shape for the centre and the curved rays moving in clockwise direction around it[14] (Plate 14).

The *cakra* or wheel is also made of the pipal leaves or branches in the place of the rays or also of the headed necks of bulls or urus as rays. Bull is also associated, along with the bird eagle, with the sun. As has already been noted, the eagle is associated with Asura in India and elsewhere. Depictions of eagle are rare in the Indus valley but a seal or two have been found at many important sites and in fact, the rarity itself testifies the importance and high mark of respect associated with it. The wheel made out of pipal leaf and bull-necks is found in several places e.g. Marshall, vol. II, pl. CXII, 383 and 386, 382. The motif of a three-headed bull which resembles the sun-motif with the three-heads

for rays, to which may be added the body and the legs which fit in with the pattern, is also found on seals discovered at Mohenjo-daro.[15] The use of the sun-disc in later Hindu and Buddhist symbolism and its depictions in sculptures etc. may be traced. Viṣṇu carries a weapon called Sudarśana-cakra in his right hand. It revolves round his finger. Even as the name suggests it is a wheel or disc (*cakra*) of the sun the visual aspect of which is emphasized in Sudarśana, good to look at. It also symbolises the Aryan victory by making the sun-disc associated with the god Asura, a mere weapon of Viṣṇu. The more important use of the sun-disc is found in Buddhism where the first sermon of the Buddha is called *dhammacakkapavattana*, setting in motion the Wheel of Law. It appears that essentially *dhamma*, the Buddhist counterpart of Ṛgvedic *ṛta*, is the sacred Law as preached by the Buddha and is equal to the moral order. It is also the external phenomena, to be equated with the cosmic order. The sense of causality is present in both, expressed through the notion of order and in Buddhism through that of revolving. In this system, the Buddha occupied the same position as Asura. It may be noted here that in the early days of Stūpa-worship, the main symbol representing the Buddha was the wheel or the pipal tree shown standing on a platform.[16] It was not Buddha image. It appears plausible that these symbols had deep roots in the tradition and the usage was not an innovation. As has been already noted both pipal leaf and the circular disc occupied an important place in the Indus religion too, and may point to a certain continuity of tradition. Thus, the Buddha, though on a different level, became a legitimate successor of the non-Aryan godhead without being a god and probably also served in the similar capacity to the non-Aryan peoples, traditions, cults, practices, etc. which might still have been flourishing in lower strata of the society. Thus the Buddha's message cut across the gap created by the intervening centuries of Aryan domination and established a continuity in evolution. Looked at from this viewpoint, the Buddha's rebellion against the sacrificial system gives a new dimension to the problem viz. Was the sacrificial system whole-heartedly accepted by the non-Aryan populace? Probably, they had already seen through it, as not fulfilling their spiritual needs. There are reasons to believe that the pre-Aryans were acquainted with Assyrian mythology or a type similar to that in which the problem of evil occupied a prominent place. In fact a two-fold religious solution can be envisaged: one which consisted of moral behaviour, as a way of life while retaining the position in society and the other as the Buddha prescribed, renunciation and introspection coupled with yogic exercises leading to psychic emancipation from the chain of birth and death. In both the cases, the evil is conquered or effectively dealt with. In fact looked at from the various problems reflected in motifs of the Sumerian myths, or in the cosmogonic hymns discussed above, it may not be wrong to say that the Buddha was not really the first man to be confronted with the problems of suffering,

disease, decay and death. In Sumerian mythology, Gilgamesh is shown to have grappled with all these and even sought after immortality. But the uniqueness of the Buddha's message to mankind lies in his conquest of evil in human life through the yogic practices. Thus the real contribution of the Buddha is the combination of introspection with the meditational practices for psychic transformation. Now the problem that remains is whether the Asuras of Indus valley were acquainted with the yogic techniques, which seems plausible, though not much evidence is available at the present stage.

If what is said above about the two ways of dealing with the problem of evil is true, it will make the whole pattern of Buddhist social organization into lay and monk followers of the Buddha comprehensible. This means that to the ancient people there were clearly two ways of grappling with the problem of evil. First was to lead the ordinary life according to the ethical standards laid down by the religious leaders. The second was to renounce the world and devote oneself completely to the prescribed religious life. As far as they fought the evil in universe, they were on the same level. When the Buddha organised his following in this fashion, calling the Bhikkhus or monk followers by a collective term saṅgha bearing linguistic resemblance to Assy. shangu, priest, he might have been conforming to an ancient practice. Thus it is possible that the historical phenomenon of the Buddha and his teachings may have really been a continuation of an older tradition which was interrupted, or at least presently available evidence does not testify as to its continuous transmission, by the destruction of the Indus valley civilization and the consequent dispersal of its population in different directions.

The posture of the deity on the so-called Yogi-seal and a few others[17] may be described as cross-legged with the fingers resting on the knees. He is sitting on a four-legged platform (which is sometimes absent) on the front of which are depicted two deer. The horned headdress is the unmistakable sign of his divinity. The cross-legged posture and the two deer depicted below the seat are reminiscent of the later representations of the Buddha in the *Dhammacakkapavattanamuddā* at Sāranāth. There too, the two deer adorn the *Vajra-pīṭha* and the story of the attainment of the Bodhi by the Buddha under the pipal-tree at Bodh-Gayā once again brings home the sacredness still—after a millennium or more—associated with it in the minds of the people. It was hallowed enough to be a substitute or a symbol for the sanctity associated with the Buddha, as for example, the Enlightenment scene on a panel of the Sāñci Stupa depicts a pipal tree to whom offerings are being made by the devotees.[18] The original association of the pipal tree starts with Asura and continues in the Buddha cult. It seems plausible that after they settled in India, the Asuras came under the influence of a

local cult, probably yogic, which was syncretised with that of Asura. The result was the cult of the Yogi-Asura as reflected in the seal. There is no evidence to support this except the progress of the symbols as traced above. The syncretisation, if it is true, presupposes the existence of a yogic cult, before the advent of the Harappans in India. No archaeological traces have so far been reported to support this. It is probably no accident that the Buddha rejected all the existing philosophical systems as well as the Brahmanic sacrificial system and turned to meditation for the attainment of peace. The yogic cult with its emphasis on meditation as also many other non-Aryan cults always flourished as an undercurrent despite the predominant trend of Brahmanic sacrificial religious activity. This becomes obvious if the various non-Aryan practices in Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda are analysed.[19] To the Buddha goes the credit of systematising this cult into a philosophico-religious system. It is also no accident or not just the Buddha's sagacity and farsightedness that he chose as his medium the local language. Probably the cult was already widely known amongst the non-Aryan populations who were by that time formed into the lower castes. A certain amount of terminology found in Pali now also may have existed in the local languages. For example the term *saṅgha*, the assembly of Buddhist monks, might have been a modified form of *shangu*, a high priest in Assyrian.

The female terracotta figurines found at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, a large number of Balochi sites, Chanhu-daro etc. may be the representations of the mother-goddess. The cult was widely spread over ancient Mesopotamia, Assyria, Persia and so on. As shown below,[20] probably Uṣas the resplendent dawn-goddess besides representing the phenomenon of dawn was also the earthly high-priestess, of royal birth of the dawn as the mother of sun. The goddess and her consort, the city-god, always existed together and were united symbolically every year in spring time to ensure the fertility in vegetation and animal world. Actually, the later Vajrayanic union of the practicant, the representative of the Asura-Yogi-the Buddha-the Vajrayanic male-deity and the *mudrā* or the female partner who represents the mother-goddess-Vajrayanic female deity is really symbolic of this early union. The purpose of Vajrayanic union is not to ensure fertility. It is an aim-inhibited act and a test of the yogic aptitude of the practitioner.[21] It may be of interest to note that from Assur where the gypsum plaque of the male god was found are also reported the nude female figurines.[22]

The Harappans, as Mackay emphasizes, were also familiar with the concept of a solar deity identified above on the basis of the literary material as Asura. Both the elements thus seem to have been combined at an early age. As noted above, in the god Ashura were combined two gods—Osiris and Ra, one Sumero-Babylonian godhead of fertility and the other, the Egyptian sun-god.[23]

Certain pieces made of different materials and engraved with some scenes are described as amulets. One such piece (Plate 15a) is triangular having three scenes on its sides, a, b, c. Scene (a) consists of two characters in the left hand-corner one of which is a pipal leaf, the divine significance of which has been discussed already. At the extreme right a man is trying to spear a bull behind which there is a tree and three human figures looking on. One foot of the man spearing the bull is kept on the bent head of the bull. The second scene (b) opens with the bull having two other heads. Behind it is a tree with a goat standing on its hind legs and the fore legs resting on the tree. This is followed by the two pictographs mentioned above. The third scene (c) consists only of two foot-prints, and a cattle, probably a bull, looking at them.

It seems that the interpretation or rather the sequence of scenes starts with (c). The earth or the creation of Asura is symbolised by the imprint of foot which the bull (bison) symbolising the destructive spirit notices. In order to destroy the creation of Asura he multiplies himself as shown in the multiple headed figure and a goat standing near the tree, probably vegetational creation of Asura in scene (b). Then in scene (a), this bull is attacked by the spirit of good, probably Asura himself or his representative. He is killed and the vegetation and human world continues without evil. This interpretation is given on the basis of Avestan tradition which is discussed below.

The scenes obviously depict cosmogonic myths and have parallels in those of Zoroastrianism. The account of world's creation given in the Bundahishn runs thus: 'Thus it is revealed in the Good Religion. Ohrmazd (the later form of Ahura Mazda) was on high in omniscience and goodness... Ahriman (Aŋgra Mainyu), slow in knowledge, whose will is to smite, was deep down in darkness... Between them was the void... Ohrmazd in his omniscience knew that the Destructive Spirit (Ahriman) existed, that he would attack and...would mingle with him...(and he knew) with what and how many instruments he would accomplish his purpose. In ideal form he fashioned forth such creation as was needful for this instrument. For three thousand years creation stayed in this ideal state... The Destructive spirit...was unaware of the existence of Ohrmazd. Then he rose up from the depths and went to the border from whence the lights are seen. When he saw the light of Ohrmazd intangible, he rushed forward...he made haste to destroy it. Seeing valour and supremacy superior to his own, he fled back to the darkness and fashioned many demons... Then Ohrmazd...offered peace to the Destructive spirit. After the offer was rejected, Ohrmazd thought of a stratagem to avoid an endless struggle and he proposed a period of nine thousand years, since he knew that 'three thousand (years) would pass entirely according to the will of Ohrmazd, three thousand years in mixture would pass according to the will of both Ohrmazd and Ahriman and

that in the last battle the Destructive spirit would be made powerless'. This time, in his ignorance, the Destructive spirit accepted Ohrmazd's proposal ".. just as two men who fight a duel fix a term (saying) 'Let us on such a day do battle till night falls'."[24]

The triangular shape of the amulet signifies the three periods of three thousand years each, in which the bull looking at the foot-prints signifies the first three thousand years entirely according to the will of Ahura-Mazda. The second is the mixture of the wills of both, Ahura-Mazda and Ahriman and in the third, Ahriman is being destroyed by (the representative of) Ahura-Mazda. It is likely that this aspect of Ahura/Asura, or rather Ashura, as that was probably the god of the Asuras of the Indus civilization, corresponded to Mitra, the god of contract. What was struck between Ahura and Ahriman was really a contract that at the end of a certain period the fight will end in the destruction of the forces of Ahriman. It was but natural that Mitra as the functionary who looked after the compacts should destroy the forces of evil. In fact, both in Manicheanism[25] and Mithraism[26] it is god Mithra who punishes the demoniacal powers of darkness, a depiction of which might be traced to a seal (Plate 15b) found at Mohenjo-daro.

One more point that needs elaboration is the symbol of foot-prints for the creation of Asura. As already noted in the Ṛgvedic hymn (III.38), after fashioning the earth and the sky, the seers left their traces behind for others to follow. The traces were in the form of the forces of light and righteousness represented by the creation of Asura. The genesis of the world is explained in the Pahlavi theological tradition as follows: 'In anthropomorphic fashion it is said that the various creations evolved from a manlike body. First the sky was created from the head, then the earth from the feet, the waters from the tears, the plants from the hair, the bull from the right hand and, finally, fire from the mind.'[27] In general, in spite of variations in detail, the similarity between the myth and its contents with the Puruṣasūkta of ṚV[28] is noted by Dresden. Thus the foot-prints on the amulet may be taken to represent the earth and the creation of the Asura. As has been already seen, the literary sources emphasize the creative aspect of Asura. In the creation of Asura, the *māyā*, is included the whole universe between the sky and the earth, the movable and the immovable. Thus this may have been the original meaning of *māyā* whereas in later philosophical conception *māyā* is thought of as an illusion, thus rendering the whole universe nothing but an illusion. The profound effect this concept had on the later Hindu society and the way of thinking can hardly be matched by any other.

This identification of the scenes on the amulet with the cosmogonic myths of Zoroastrianism proves the following points: First, the antiquity

of the material preserved in Zoroastrianism may be traced back to the religion practised by the Asuras in the Indus valley in pre-historic times. Secondly, this supports one of the contentions made above that the Avesta represents the tradition of the Asuras, who after their defeat in the Indus valley fled to the west. Zoroastrianism was a reply given to the vilification of the Asuras by the Aryans. This is the basic cause of the conceptual antagonism found between Ṛgveda and Zoroastrianism. Thirdly, this (i.e. the Puruṣasūkta) may provide one concrete instance in which the Asura-tradition was adapted by the Aryans as their own, with some changes in the process of adaptation. The mythic material in the first four verses of the Puruṣasūkta, according to experts, is clearly older than that of the rest of the hymn.

It would be interesting to trace this backwards to the cosmogonic myth in Assyrian mythology, though it is rather difficult as Assyrian religion and culture are not treated as a separate entity, distinct from the Akkadian and Babylonian counterparts. This and many other scenes on seals and amulets found in the Indus valley testify the beliefs and practices of the Asuras in this region to be independent from those of the Babylonians and also probably those of the Sumerians. It may be useful to compare this myth with Gilgamesh and the Bull of heaven, which is described by Kramer as follows: "After a lacuna of some twenty lines, the poem continues with an address to Gilgamesh by the goddess Inanna....in which she describes the gifts and favours she is prepared to shower upon him. It is reasonable to assume that the preceding missing portion of the text contained Inanna's love proposals. Another break in the text follows, which must have contained Gilgamesh's rejection of Inanna's offers. When the text becomes intelligible once again, we find Inanna before An, the heaven-god asking to be presented with the Bull of Heaven. An at first refuses, but Inanna threatens to take up the matter with all the great gods of the universe. Terrified, An grants her request. Inanna then sends the Bull of Heaven down against Erech, and it ravages the city. From here on, the available text, which concludes with an address by Enkindu to Gilgamesh, becomes intelligible. The end of the poem, which probably described Gilgamesh's victorious struggle with the Bull of heaven is missing altogether."[29]

There is similarity between the motifs of the myth depicted on the amulet and this myth of Gilgamesh, a semi-divine being, to whom the Gods have access. Gilgamesh in the Sumerian myth corresponds with the Asura/Ahura. Inanna's proposals and their rejection by Gilgamesh represent the assertion of the forces of evil or destruction which became crystallized in the form of the Bull of Heaven which is ultimately destroyed by Gilgamesh corresponding to the final destruction of Ahriman by Ahura-Mazda. It is possible that the prototype of the Indus myth was similar to the Gilgamesh-myth. The crystallization into forces

of good and evil may possibly be a later development. It appears that this myth underwent many ramifications and is probably at the basis of a well-developed series of myths associated with religious personages, especially in Indian religions in which the forces of evil are represented by females. As an example may be cited the myth associated with the Buddha's temptation. He was assailed by Māra with the army of his daughters called Aratī, Taṇhā etc. The Buddha overcomes all and calls upon the earth to witness this. This is what is depicted through the *Bhūmīsparśamudrā*. In fact, temptation through females is a common motif in Indian mythology. The eternal feminine was seen to be having two-fold influence on the eternal male: As reflected in the Gilgamesh and Enknidu episode, the union with woman was considered as a civilising force. Enkindu, the wild man, with his contact with the whore, is made conscious of his human-origin and his destiny. This motif appears frequently in the tales of ṛṣis who performed *tapaścaryā* (penance) in the forests in order to attain the highest place symbolised by the kingship of the gods. Indra, as the king of gods, sends *apsaras*, nymphs in order to lessen the effectiveness of their penance. These ṛṣis then are lured to the nearby kingdom by the *apsaras* and their downfall is complete. Enkindu corresponds with the ṛṣi, the whore with the *apsaras* and the kingdom of Gilgamesh with the kingdom. The only new element in Indian myths is the introduction of *tapaścaryā* with the objective of attaining Indra's throne. It is possible that the prototype of these Indian myths might have been a myth similar to one of Gilgamesh-Enknidu. Both the myths might have descended from a parent myth, one branch of which survived in Mesopotamian mythology and another in the Indian. In the second case, the eternal feminine is depicted as an obstacle in man's achievement of the highest spiritual status in understanding the secret of this universe. Probably both the motifs represent two sides of the same problem and may be treated as solutions that man has achieved at two different stages in the history. In the Enkindu-stage woman or relationship with her brought about a wide range of developments which created for man a special relationship with the world of gods and through them the cosmos with Gilgamesh as the intermediary. In the second stage she becomes a hindrance in man's progress, though on a different level, but in continuation of the previous stage. Material progress is no more the objective. It is, in fact, the attainment of the state of complete freedom from material wants and hankering for them.

The eternal feminine symbolising the forces of generation and fecundity is an hindrance in the task that man set for himself. A synthesis of these two attitudes to this important problem is found in Buddhist Tantrism where the eternal feminine as a source of inspiration in the form of intuitive wisdom is accepted and along with her the material life. Man has been afraid of the material life from the moment his quest for immortality began. An ascetic way of life which shunned material

pleasures supplemented the yogic practices performed to attain psychic transformation. Tantrism has removed the 'sting' from material life by shifting the emphasis from material enjoyment to spiritual regeneration and joy accompanying it. This solution is workable at any stage of civilization. It utilizes those items of human consumption and experience which have still not lost their glamour. For its objective it has no less an experience than Nibbāṇa for which the civilization has not yet found any substitute.

The contribution of the Indus people to the prototype of the myth inherited from their ancestors is significant. The prototype of the Asura-myth was either the Gilgamesh and the Bull of heaven myth itself or a myth similar to this with Asura as the highest divinity. The myth as found in the Indus valley has already done away with the role of Inanna. Perhaps she did not exist in the prototype.

The struggle between the forces of good and evil is crystallized into a moral opposition. It is not discovered in this form of direct confrontation of the two and the ultimate victory of the forces of good and the righteous anywhere in the ancient world. Although the struggle still continues, the Asuras of Indus valley have made distinct contribution in visualizing and defining it in the clear cut manner for the first time in human history. The good and evil are conceived with clarity and boldness, without sacrificing the precision and the economy of motifs. The struggle is directly between the God and the spirit of Destruction. The omission, if the Gilgamesh episode was the prototype of this myth, or the lack, if the prototype was altogether distinct, may indicate two points: First is that Inanna is a goddess of fertility symbolising the procreative capacity in woman. She was instrumental in bringing the Bull of Heaven to earth to destroy Gilgamesh. Thus she is in a way seen as the originator of evil. She lets loose the forces of destruction at Gilgamesh because he refuses to accept her offers. Instead, he destroys the bull. Gilgamesh could displease her and reject her offers, because the fertility of which she is the goddess is no more desired by him. It is an evil and therefore when he kills Bull of Heaven, he rejects woman in her procreative capacity and the evil associated with it. That this motif of the myth is completely dispensed with means that the procreative capacity in human beings or in nature is not really looked upon as something evil. The evil was completely independent of these things. It existed from the beginning, and was coeval with God and goodness. This might also indicate a high position almost of equality of women in the society who were not even in mythopoeic thought connected with evil. Evil was something which existed on its own. Secondly, the absence of Inanna myth may also mean that the generative processes were largely rationalised through technological advance, that man was no more a slave of gods always subjected to their malicious whims and fancies. In fact, a

new concept of divinity is introduced which is without any reference to fertility. It is probably a product of a stage of civilization where fertility in man and nature was not a mere accident or chance but a systematic controlled process. It enabled man to think of the creation in nature and man as a product of ordered events. Thus here it is possible to say that man had attained a certain amount of liberation from the fear which accompanied his relationship with nature and is reflected in his conception of the god, who was not just the master of all creation but is also its protector. He protected it from the spirit of Destruction and is fighting all evil as such. These people who conceived their god, as the destroyer of evil, saw the universe as the creation of the god in the world. They saw the evil in the world as an independent entity, not a creation of the god but which had entered the creation of the god, only to be destroyed in the end, by the god himself. They did not relate the evil to nature which may again presuppose certain mastery of nature by man as a consequence of which nature did not appear to him as a malevolent spirit. The concept of god and the concept of nature were separate. God represented good and nature could be mastered.

Even when the Indus civilization was destroyed and the population fled, the essence of the religious philosophy represented in this myth did not die. It not only survived in the form of Avesta, as is testified by the citation given above, but it appeared in Hindu philosophy in a new form, and that is of the philosophy preached in Bhagavad-gītā. The setting in which the Gītā was preached by Lord Kṛṣṇa to his human disciple Arjuna is significant. The battle is about to start when Arjuna is irresolute about the rightness of the action. The scene of battle represents confrontation with evil, which Arjuna is asked to destroy. Kṛṣṇa not only urges Arjuna to fight but says he incarnates himself for the protection of the good, the destruction of the evil-doers, and (finally) for the establishment of *dharma* (Bhagavad-gītā IV.8). Thus the battle between the god and the forces of evil was not forgotten. The three sides of the amulet, the three periods of the Avestan myth and the three stages in Kṛṣṇa's action are the same.

Asura a solar deity was conceived as a nature god originally. In the development of civilization, a nature god underwent transformation and came to symbolise the aspirations of the worshippers in this world. This may be the logical outcome of the concept of *ṛta*, the cosmic order which is also moral order. An analysis of the concepts of so-called Ṛgvedic divinities bearing the names of natural phenomena shows that these phenomena represented the functionaries of the Asura governance which maintained the moral order in the kingdom. Asura, the sun-god, became the centre of the cosmic and moral order just as the sun is the centre of the universe. Man's activities revolve round rising and setting of the sun, he is dependent on it for light and heart. In the absence of sun fire pro-

vides both. Therefore it came to be regarded as the symbol of sun or being in touch with him for fulfilling those needs which the sun fulfilled. This incidentally explains the maintenance of fire-altar in the Zoroastrian temples, as well as the reference of agni in ṚV X.124 where he says: 'I was with father Asura for a long time etc.' It follows from this that the Asuras in the Indus valley were also fire-worshippers or that at least there was not great difference between the symbolism associated in Zoroastrianism with fire and Ahura-Mazda and those of the Asuras. Once Asura came to be identified with the sun as the centre of the cosmic order, it was but logical for him to become the centre of moral order. If the god is fighting the evil on the cosmic level, it is in the fitness of things that the human beings should fight evil in their lives. At the end of the assigned period, the evil will be defeated by the God and so will the righteous be victorious on earth. This world-view holds out a great hope for the future and a courage to fight evil for the sake of future generations. It may further mean that a community whose world-view is oriented towards defeating the evil will be forward looking and progressive. The fact that the evil can be fought against and destroyed may imply widely-held belief that man can be good and there is nothing inherently bad in human nature as such and that evil can be effectively handled. This holds out a great hope for mankind.

First among the elements of the myth is the coeval existence of good and evil as represented by the God and the spirit of destruction. The spirit of destruction or the evil is not a part of the God like Satan who was the fallen angel. It existed apart and was for some time equal to God but was ultimately defeated by him. The defeat signifies the weakness of evil. The coeval existence may also point to the absence of the concept of sin. The evil was the part of the universe and has not come into existence through sinning against the God. Probably the believer in this world-view held that the universe was the outcome of the forces of Creation as represented by God and the forces of Destruction as represented by evil, which are opposed to each other. However, he believed that this opposition will end in the destruction of evil, which itself was his reward for fighting it. The second significant element is the strategy to avoid the endless struggle during the second period of three thousand years. Is it an explanation of the evil in the human world? Is it a suggestion that evil is under the control of the good? And psychologically speaking does it mean that a possibility of expressing evil under controlled circumstances with a view to finally getting rid of it was being visualized? The third element is the compact of final destruction of evil. The myth used in the Mithraic cult was probably this and because of this compact, it was Mithra-Mitra, who as will be shown in Chapter XII.4 presided over all contracts, and killed the Bull symbolising evil and destruction. It is possible to destroy *even* the spirit of destruction through compact, through keeping the given promise.

The concepts of god and his creation and the spirit of Destruction, as reflected in this myth, indicate a highly civilized society. It does not express its world-view through exuberant growth of mythopoeic thought. Instead a certain amount of severity and austerity characterises it. It was preoccupied with the problem of good and evil in the universe.

Many engraved pieces of different materials found at Harappan sites have been described as amulets which seems to be doubtful in the light of foregoing discussion because had they been amulets their occurrence on a larger scale is expected. But from each site one single specimen of a seal with eagle has been reported which probably speaks of its importance as a seal rather than an amulet, a thing of more popular use. A definite pattern is evident in the use of the motifs on seals. The largest number of seals bear the engraving of the unicorn along with the pictographic legend. Next in frequency comes the bison (Bos gaurus) (Plate 16a) motif, followed by the majestic Brahmani bull with the large lap. Fourth comes the elephant, almost as frequent as the Brahmani bull. Rhinoceros and Tiger are also found. The motif of the composite mythic animal comes next. The Gilgamesh motif (a man fighting with two tigers) is also found in Mohenjo-daro. The eagle, the composite animal with the body of star-fish and head of a tiger, a crocodile, a three-headed animal and tiger are also reported in just single specimens or, as in the case of rhino, a little more frequently. These motifs do not include the mythic-scenes which have also to be accounted for. There is little doubt about the sanctity attached to all these animals, especially elephant, tiger, rhinoceros and buffalo, as all these appear on the so-called Yogi-seal where the central figure wearing the horned head-dress indicatory of the divine nature is surrounded by these animals (Plate 16b).

The proud Brahmani Bull (Plate 16c) on the seals and the later expressions comparing man to the bull *naravṛṣabha* may be indicative of the importance of bull as an animal associated with Asura, who is said to have given birth to the first bull. Probably the reverence with which the Hindu tradition looks upon bull and cow may be traced back to this association rather than to the importance bestowed on the animal by the pastoral pursuits of the Aryans! The association of bull with the god Asura is reminiscent of the symbol of god Ningirsu where the eagle is depicted standing on the two lions, with both the wings spread out and below this is sitting the bull as a symbol of abundance.[30] Further the sitting bull is met with in the later Hindu tradition as the *vāhana* (conveyance) of god Shiva, and is always found sitting outside the Shiva temple. As is well known, the Shiva-cult must have been originally a male-fertility cult and very probably here too the bull symbolised abundant and continuous progeny.

It is possible to correlate the mythological scenes with a single deity which seems to be Asura-Marduk. At Harappa, several seals[31] depicting a male figure with horned head-dress surrounded by a continuous branch[32] of pipal tree are discovered. This same figure appears on another seal where though the tree branch is missing, he is shown with a horned head-dress and the posture seems to be that of the later Naṭeśvara, i.e. standing on one leg, with the other leg crossed over the knee. This god is practically always associated with tree. In a seal (Plate 17) from Mohenjo-daro he is depicted standing inside the tree whose roots can also be seen. He is wearing a horned head-dress with a long flowing plait like hair. A similarly dressed figure of a priest is kneeling by. An animal (buffalo or urus) is standing by and seven human figures are depicted at the bottom of the seal. Though they have been described as females, it is very difficult to make out their sex. They are identified as seven daughters of Bau, the Sumerian goddess, or Śītalā and her six sisters in Indian mythology. But this does not seem to be a very satisfactory interpretation. As is shown subsequently in Chapter XII.19, this probably is the depiction of the cosmogonic myth with the seven seers representing the seven stages of *ṛta* or cosmic order. Another seal which may be related to this group is the one on which a deity with the characteristic horned head-dress is coming down the platform, raised round a tree, following a bull. From beyond the bull a human figure is kneeling down in homage to the deity.[33] Though it is difficult to identify the scene, association of the deity with the tree is noteworthy.

The other aspect of the deity is the seating posture, generally surrounded by or accompanied with animals or serpents or cobras. Under this aspect may be classed the so-called yogi-seal or the male deity with the horned head-dress and surrounded by animals or the deity with two serpents.[34] In this class may fall Harappa, sealing 303 on pl. XCIII.

The Sumerian hero Gilgamesh is probably depicted in two scenes. Four seals excavated by Mackay from Mohenjo-daro[35] depict a male grappling with two tigers. This hero has been identified with Gilgamesh. Two copper tablets[36] seem to depict a semi-divine being like Gilgamesh. His friend Enkindu has been identified on a seal excavated by Marshall from Mohenjo-daro.[37] In fact the seal no. 356 on the same plate depicts a similar being. The other scene about Gilgamesh is the killing of the bull of heaven by him depicted on what is called an amulet.[33] With this seal or with the seal depicting the compact of Asura and the evil may be related seal no. 279 excavated by Mackay,[39] which depicts a buffalo being speared.

Another scene, appearing very frequently at both the sites of the Harappan culture, Harappa and Mohenjo-daro,[40] is of a human figure

seated on a tree with one knee resting on the branch of the tree. It is beckoning to a tiger which is facing the right and is looking backwards at the human figure. The scene eludes explanation.

Two seals from Mohenjo-daro[41] with the seated deity not surrounded by tree or by animals are worth mentioning.

Obviously they are not different deities. It is the same godhood which appears in different scenes and there seems to be a conceptual continuum behind the depictions, without any radical change. It is god Asura, the solar-deity, who is the creator of all the animals and vegetation and to which man prays for progeny, prosperity and abundance.

3. Dāśas, the lake-dwellers

As has been discussed above in Chapter II.4, the term *dāśa* might have originally meant sailor, mariner, fisherman. The reference to *naun-agara*, a floating city, in JB I.125-127 where Triśīrṣa Gandharva was residing may also be recalled. The fortress of the *dāśa* Śuṣṇa is said to be moving. Later, in relation to the Aśvins will be discussed the types of ships used by them. Thus it appears that all the worthwhile references to shipping and the acquaintance with activities related to that appear mainly in the context of the non-Aryans. In fact, the later lawgivers imposed a ban on voyages, heavy punishments being meted out to the defaulters. The poets of Ṛgveda do not display a close acquaintance with the different parts of the ship. It is mainly referred to as a standard of comparison as e.g. "lead us across all enmities as through a ship",[42] or "bring thou to us over to welfare just as a ship over a stream".[43] In fact, *naumaṇḍa* mentioned in JB cannot be satisfactorily translated on the basis of available data which probably speak both of its foreign origin and the ignorance of the parts of ship.

On the other hand, the Indus civilization has yielded much evidence of the acquaintance of the peoples with navigation, riverine and oceanic. There are in all four depictions of ships from Indus valley, including one on a pottery sherd. First is the seal described by Mackay in his Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro. It is not a stylized depiction of a ship and hence it provides details of the Indus ship. It has "a sharply upturned prow and stern, a feature which is present in nearly all archaic representations of boats; for example, the same type of boat appears on Early Minoan seals, on the Pre-Dynastic pottery of Egypt, and on the cylinder seals of Sumer. In the last mentioned country this type of boat was used down to Assyrian times. On the ivory knife-handle of Gebel-el-Arak in the Louvre are depicted ships which bear a very close resemblance to the one on our seal; and the other scenes on this handle are, indeed, explained by Petrie, as not Egyptian, but the product of an

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Oriental people inspired by Elam and the Tigris region."[44] Next comes a roughly sketched boat on a sherd. The boat is of archaic type. Like the seal-depiction, this also has a sharply upturned prow and stern and is apparently controlled by a single oar. "The mast may possibly be a tripod, and one or two yards are shown, or, conceivably, one only, the second line representing a furled sail."[45] Mackay further suggests that the Harappans must have been very familiar with this type of boats, although the depictions of them are pretty rare and the boat might have been used for traffic of all kinds on the river. The high prow and the stern, according to him, is especially suitable to a river-boat in that cargo could by this means be safely landed on a shelving bank. Similar boats were used in ancient Egypt and elsewhere for sea and river traffic. It is possible that the Harappans also used boats on sea, as is shown by the types of fish-bones found on these sites. They include bones of marine fish also. This aspect will be discussed later. Third is the "terracotta object" found in the more recent excavations by Dales. On the terracotta object is depicted in relief a boat with two birds and a central cabin or shed and two oars on one side. The object was found on the HR mound and at a late period level.[46] Fourth is the seal from Harappa[47] which is described as a larger ship or galley by Kosambi.

In the depictions on the terracotta piece and the first seal, the small cabin or a covered shelter is distinctly visible and appears to be gaily decorated with streamers in two rows. As recorded by Mackay, the cabins of Indus boats of today are still decorated in a similar manner on festive occasions. This cabin is probably described in the JB passage cited above as *naumaṇḍa*. *Maṇḍa* in this context may be the *maṇḍapa*, a temporary shed, pendall or a room. The two birds sitting on the sides of the cabin might have been used like the crows of the Bāveru Jātaka where it is said that Indian merchants sailed along the coast, using a compass crow who was released to find the direction of the nearest land in case the ship should have been driven out of sight of any landmark. This later tradition is thus directly confirmed by the depiction of two birds on the terracotta plaque. The inference of Kosambi that the method of navigation recorded in the Bāveru Jātaka of a late date may really have been 'a far earlier tradition',[48] is correct. The tradition may be as old as the Harappan civilization in India and might have been known to the ancient world.

Now to examine the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa tradition about the *naunagara* in the light of archaeological findings. Apparently the word *nagara* appears late in Sanskrit literature but *nagara* in Sumerian and also Akkadian means a mason or a carpenter. If the Sanskrit word *nagara* or *nagarī* is interpreted in the light of the Sumerian word, it may mean the work of a mason or carpenter and in a secondary sense a township, a handiwork of masons and carpenters. In fact, it is expected that

a pre-agricultural community would not become city-dwellers before the lapse of a more or less long period. This would explain the late appearance of this probably Sumerian word borrowed into Sanskrit. The word *naunagara*, a ship-city or a floating city presupposes the existence of settlements consisting of the floating houses either in marshy areas or in lakes or in a place where water current is not flowing speedily.

The explorations of N.G. Majumdar[49] in the area of lake Manchhar have led to the discovery of many Harappan sites situated on the small islands in the lake itself. Amongst the sites explored and examined by Majumdar, sites of Mashak in the lake, Lohri four miles to the north-east of Shah Hasan which is situated on the banks of the lake, and Lakhiyo, another four miles north-east of Lohri were firmly established to be the sites belonging to the Harappan culture. The site of Lal Chatto in the lake yielded pottery which the excavator thought to be similar to that of the Jhukar culture from the type-site and from Lohumjo-daro. In the surface collections were gathered a number of chertflakes and fragments of "perforated pottery". He describes it as: "In technique and ornamentation it has very little in common with Amri, excepting that both use the same colours. On the other hand, it has certain points of resemblance with the late prehistoric potteries of Jhukar and Lohumjo-daro. There is a general agreement in the colour-scheme followed by the Jhukar and Lohumjo-daro potters and those of Lal Chatto. Then again there are certain designs that are common, the most noteworthy being red balls in compartments. Lastly there is the evidence furnished by the painted dish...which is exactly similar to a dish from Lohumjo-daro...in shape. They agree also in having a wavy line at the edge and a chocolate band on the outer side." This passage brings out two points: The similarity between the Lal Chatto pottery and Jhukar late phase noted by the excavator determines this site as one of those inhabited by the late Harappans after the destruction of the major cities of Harappa and along with it the civic authority. Further these sites may be grouped into a class which may be called the late or post-Aryan Harappans on the western side, whereas Harappa with its cemetery H type may represent the eastern group of late Harappans having representation and affinities with the later cultures of the Gaṅgā-Yamunā valley. Some Harappan settlements may also be expected in the same region.[50]

Secondly, he establishes the existence of a lake-dwelling people in Sind during the later part of the Indus period, who lived on the bank of the lake and were not primarily an agricultural people. In fact the western bank of Manchhar abuts on rocky beds, leaving very little margin for cultivation. The people living in this area must have been, therefore, compelled to depend largely on fish and such other game as

the lake could afford. Their means of subsistence may not have been different from those of the people living in this area at the present day (i.e. 1934). Boating being their profession, it is understandable that they would like to live near it. Many of them live in boats with their families or in huts constructed on platforms on the surface of water, resembling the neolithic and chalcolithic pile-dwellings of the lakes of Switzerland and other European countries. It is however difficult to say whether the lake-dwellers of Manchhar had similar pile-houses. The small-scale excavations at Lal Chatto and Mashak have not yielded any evidence of bricks or stone nor is there any other indication to suggest that the lake-dwellings were made of these materials. "The cuttings revealed a deposit of pure silt and the find of the household objects like pottery etc. in this silt is unaccountable unless we suppose the existence of wooden or mud houses built on an elevation made by earth work. It may, therefore, be supposed that the little islands like Lal Chatto and Mashak were the predecessors of the modern fishing hamlets of lake Manchhar and that the pile-dwellings of the lake are a survival from ancient times."[51]

It appears that there must have been many localities of the lake-dwellers or boat-dwellers especially in marshy regions or in lakes who lived by fishing. It may not be unreasonable to assume that the people described as dāśa in Ṛgveda might have belonged to this class, i.e. those who did not make their living by agriculture, but whose chief profession was fishing and sailing. It may be recollected that in the list of the *balis* of *puruṣamedha*-sacrifice discussed in Chapter II.4, the dāśa appears as suitable *balī* for the *upasthāvara* for which the meaning of 'a type of lake or a semi-stagnant sheet of water' has been suggested above. Moreover, considering the ecology of the Indus civilization, it was quite natural that the folk living on the banks of the river should be good fishermen as well as sailors. In fact, the town of Shah Hasan on the western edge of the lake Manchhar is a centre of fishing-trade even now. There is no reason why it should not have been so in the past too. Thus it is likely that there were many such localities of lake-dwellers in and around the Indus valley and also in Baluchistan and Afghanistan. The *naunagara* might have indicated the settlement of the lake-dwellers.

Since this group bore a name distinguishing it from the other communities, the assumption that they constituted a distinct community with a profession and were sizeable in number is justified. They also might have been a prominent well-organised group with capable leadership. Probably Śambara was their leader who called himself a dāśa and owned a moving fortress, a huge ship. Would it be reasonable to assume that this well-knit group was satisfied with fishing on lakes and in the river Indus and never ventured on to the sea either for fishing or for trade and commerce? Archaeological findings show that the dāśa clan must have been expert sailors, who were equally at ease on the

river and the sea. The Harappan boats could have been of use both for sea and river traffic. The coastal stations of Harappan culture between Karachi and the Pakistan-Iran border give some idea of the coastal traffic towards the Persian Gulf. The three sites of Sotka-koh, Bala Kot and Sutkagen-dor now found to be 8 to 30 km. from the coast might once have been situated beside a navigable channel. There are reasons to believe that the coastline has advanced southwards with the deposition of silt and wind blown sand (see infra sec. 6). The sites of Sotka-koh and Sutkagen-dor seem to have been similarly built on the Harappan pattern consisting of a citadel and the lower town. The pottery found at both the sites was of normal Harappan types: offering stands, plates decorated with concentric circles of thumb-nail impressions or with concentric circles on a red slip, storage jars with black intersecting circles etc. with the difference that at the former site were also a number of other painted sherds probably from the Baluchistan hill-cultures. Besides this evidence for the westward traffic by sea, there is other kind of evidence which confirms its destination as the Persian Gulf and the surrounding area. A number of seals have been reported from the distant lands and have been looked upon as an evidence for dating the Indus culture and also as the evidence for the trade contacts of Indus valley with the western lands. In all 299 seals have been reported from Ur in the valley of the lower Euphrates, from Babylonia, from Kish, Susa, Lagash, Umma (near Lagash), Tell Asmar, two from some unknown sites, from Tepe Gawra near Mosul and a fragment from Hama in Syria.[52] To these may be added a large number of circular seals found at Bahrain and Failaka[53] which are also to be considered as belonging to the same group of a varied but related extension of the great Indus series, made largely in the Persian Gulf for use in connection with the long-range Indus trade. These seals have been dated between the Pre-Sargonid (i.e. before 2350 B.C.) and 1923 B.C.[54] Thus the evidence for contacts between Mesopotamia and the Indus valley is almost definite for the period just before Sargon of Akkad and probably continues after that with a gap into the Larsa period upto the last quarter of 20th c. B.C. This traffic between the two countries was almost certainly via sea and thus must have been largely controlled by the powerful sea-going people who called themselves dāśa in memory of their ancestor Dasa, who led Manu out of the great flood.

In this context of foreign trade and commerce may be mentioned the discovery of what is thought to be the dock for shipping at an Harappan site in Saurashtra, called Lothal.[55] Although the excavator S.R. Rao seems to be almost certain about the use of an oblong enclosure of 730′ long and about 120′ wide, revetted in baked brick and with a sluice gate at one end as a dockyard for the merchant ships, serious objections have been raised to it. The suggestions of Leshnik seem to point in a different direction. The large artificial basin does not

seem to meet either the requirements of a mooring station for merchant vessels nor the settlement of a port. The alternative explanation offered for the basin is 'that it served as an irrigation tank and secondarily, as a source for drinking water'. It is also suggested that the water was lifted out of the basin by the help of a device called *shaduf*, of considerable antiquity, a representation of which is also found on one of the Mohenjo-daro seals. Probably, the most convincing part of this suggestion is the use of the ring-stones, which were identified as anchor stones at Lothal and *Yonis* or architectural units at other sites like Mohenjo-daro, as the counterweights for the arm of a *shaduf*.[56] Thus it seems that the claims of the Lothal-basin to be a dockyard are at this stage rather doubtful unless some more evidence is unearthed to reinforce them.

It is but natural that the people living on the riverside should use fish in their diet and as such it should provide a regular occupation to at least a section of the people. Fish-bones of a variety of fishes have been collected from Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and Chanhu-daro. The varieties of fish eaten by the Harappans were fresh-water fish as well as marine. Amongst the former class may be counted the Rita and Wallago which occur in the rivers and might have been caught locally. Arius occurs in the seas and estuaries of tropical regions and it may travel up along the tide and enter the fresh waters. But it is not likely that this variety would penetrate as high up as Mohenjo-daro. It might have been caught there or on the sea and brought to Mohenjo-daro.[57]

The extensive use of shell at the Harappan sites is the testimony both of the workmanship in preparing a finished product and of its supporting industries like shell-gathering, cleaning and making it ready for use. The varieties of shell gathered from Mohenjo-daro indicate that 'the people of the Indus civilization obtained their shells from a number of places along the coast of India and the Persian Gulf'.[58]

Besides the paintings of the fish on the pottery, which are said to be of marine type, the instruments for fishing have been found at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. Fishing nets were no doubt in use, as the pottery rings used as the net-weights are found in large numbers at Mohenjo-daro.[59] Besides this, two varieties of hooks, barbed and unbarbed, of copper and bronze, have also been reported from various sites. Hooks of exactly similar pattern as reported in Mackay's excavations at Mohenjo-daro have been found in the Swiss lake dwellings.[60] Majumdar has noted the curious similarity between the modern pile-houses built on the Sind lakes and the Swiss lake-dwellings. From the point of view of investigating further the nature of similarities, a study of the culture of the Swiss lake-dwellers is necessary. It is not unlikely that such a study might reveal some connections just as in the case of the Gypsies who were originally in India and later spread all over Europe. A special

type of fishing was observed by Majumdar at Lake Manchhar consisting of setting up enclosures in the lake with long bamboo poles to which nets are attached, with an open access on one side of the enclosure. Fishes are attracted into this enclosure when fishermen, constantly beating the bell-metal utensils from their boat, approach the enclosure. This method is called 'Kheddah' and is practised in other lakes of Sind. Besides all these methods, there is evidence of the fish-boats being in use.

It may be concluded that fishing was a fairly developed occupation and that the Harappans caught both marine and fresh-water fish. The evidence from Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā, in fact, suggests that besides hooks etc. harpoons were also used for fishing and in fact *dhīvara* is the fisherman who catches fish with harpoon and is offered as *bali* to the *saras*, lake. It is not certain whether harpoons were used for fishing purposes in the Harappan civilization as no harpoon is reported. However, it is possible that *dhīvara*, from etymological point of view and from his mention in the list of *balīs*, might have been non-Aryan. Whether they were Harappan or not cannot be said with certainty. The barbed hook variety is probably the discovery of the Harappans themselves, though it is known from 18th and 19th dynasties of Egypt. No barbed hooks are reported from Susa. One hook unearthed at al 'Ubaid is of uncertain date, but is similar to Mohenjo-daro specimen.[61] The addition of a new professional implement may indicate the need to increase the supply for economic gains.

It may be relevant here to note that many members of fisherman's community in Bengal call themselves Dāsas even to this day. Dāsa and Dāśa mean a man of fisherman's community.[62] Majority of them are poverty-stricken and backward but those who are in the fish-selling trade have amassed great wealth.

It is possible to show that the class of people mentioned in the Ṛgveda as Dāśa were essentially a people who lived, not on agriculture but on sailing, for fishing and trade. This is how they were distinguished from the Asuras who were mainly agriculturists. Whether these Dāśas were a racial unit also is difficult to say at the present state of our knowledge. They had a distinct cultural identity like the present Koli community of the western coast and Bombay. Evidence in the material culture of the Indus civilization indirectly supports a possible existence of a class of people who might have subsisted on sailing and fishing for trade and traffic.

4. The structure of domestic economy

The existence of a large number of Indus type of seals with or without the script, found over a wide area, indicates trade contacts with

these countries. This is also supported by the discovery of various precious metals, stones, etc. whose provenance might have been outside the Indus valley. But the trade, on the scale envisaged in the number of seals found abroad, assumes a large quantity of agricultural and other surplus within the country and an administrative or private organisation to collect this surplus together, to distribute it where it was in demand against the commodities needed for domestic consumption.

The available archaeological material is examined from the point of view of reconstructing the possible trade system of the Indus people. The implications of the finds of seals and sealings of Indus type on Mesopotamian and Bahrain sites have not been fully brought out. It means that the Indus merchants had settlements in these areas, and that their trade activity stretched over a period of time which warranted such a stay away from their homeland and also that it was economically profitable enough to stay like that. What system or manner of trade can be envisaged from these implications? The system probably called for a stay in the land of trade with constant contact being maintained with the homeland through sending back things which were plentifully available in the foreign lands and for which there was demand at home. There were no Mesopotamians or others involved in this transaction especially at the Indus end. This is indicated by the absence of cuneiform seals or sealings in the Indus valley. Thus the transactions at the Indus end as well as in Mesopotamia were between Indus people themselves.

As discussed above, the paṇi and vaṇij were the two groups of people who probably had important functions in the system. The paṇis were perhaps the private bankers and traders who stayed at the Indus and Mesopotamian ends and invested indirectly in the trade activity through supplying capital against interest. The smaller traders i.e. vaṇij went to the foreign lands or travelled within the country supplying the goods. A somewhat similar system was followed in the trade between Assyria and Asia Minor by Assyrian merchants. This system, similar to that followed by later Assyrians, was a two-way system in which the members of the trading community stayed at the other end for four years or so at a stretch and even contracted marriages at local level which dissolved on their paying a certain marriage fee etc. It is not unlikely that the practice of settling in a distant land for the sake of trade by private individuals is older than known presently. On dated evidence of seals found on Mesopotamian sites it may go back to the period before Sargon (i.e. prior to B.C. 2350) towards the end of the Early Dynastic III continuing right upto the destruction of the Indus civilization. As the literary sources seem to suggest, the Paṇis as private individuals had amassed great wealth. It may mean that the trade was probably open to private individuals, who formed an important part. As has been seen in Assyria this system of individual enterprise was

introduced at a later date by king Erishum in the 19th century B.C. There besides the private enterprise, public institutions like the administrations of the major temples and that of the capital and other cities and also the king himself participated in the trade. The existence of loading-unloading platforms near the river end of the granary may probably point to the export of the part of the surplus collected in the granary by the king or the city-administration, most probably the former. Thus this is yet another point of similarity with the Assyrian system. This trade between Indus and the western countries was conducted by the Indus traders themselves at both the ends. Thus the trade-system of the Assyrians probably had a longer history in India than in Assyria. It is rather unfortunate that like Assyria there are no written detailed records of transactions found on the Indus sites.

The archaeological material and indications of economic activities are discussed hereafter. This evidence may be divided under two heads positive and negative. The emergent picture will be examined along with certain indications available in the literary material. In the last stage an attempt will be made to piece together the possible economic organization of the Indus civilization. Amongst the archaeological evidence may first be mentioned the division of the cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa into the citadel and the lower city which was stretched below.

The citadel is elevated on an artificial platform of mud-brick and mud. In both the cases citadels lie on the western fringe of the mounds of the lower cities. The shape of the acropolis or the citadel may be described as a parallelogram of about 400-500 yards x 200-300 yards. The present height above the flood-plain is about 40′. Both had the major axis along north-south. This elevated citadel is enclosed with massive defences which have been partially explored. The wall of the defences is about 45′ at the base and tapering upwards. Immediately outside the citadel of Harappa are discovered three groups of structures which by their vicinity to the citadel mound might have formed a part of the citadel-complex. They are two lines of residential quarters. The northern line shows traces of seven such dwellings and the southern, eight. The two blocks are separated by an open lane. The remains of an enclosure wall were also discovered. On all sides, there are lanes of 3′-4′ wide. The actual plan of the houses consisted of two rooms or a court and a room with floors partially paved with brick. On the whole, in spite of all the damage done by brick-robbing and the overlying constructions it is evident that originally the structures were planned uniformly. In and around the quarters, sometimes at higher levels and sometimes on the same level,[63] sixteen furnaces were found mostly pearshaped on plan with major axes from 3′4″ to 6′2″. The fuel used was partly cowdung and partly charcoal and heat induced through the use of bellows was enough to produce intense vitrification of the brick lining. A crucible used for

melting bronze was found nearby. The excavator thought that the bits of walls hereabouts may have supported thatched huts. Immediately to the north of these dwellings, are found eighteen circular brick platforms, with a promise of more, on further excavations. These are circular in shape with 10′9″ to 11′ in diameter and are built of four concentric rings of bricks on edge with fragments of fifty round a central hole where originally was located the wooden mortar. Fragments of straw or husked wheat and husked barley were found in the central hollow of another. "There can be little doubt therefore that the platforms surrounded mortars for the pounding of grain with long wooden pestles..." which is a common practice all over India to this day. The mortars are also made of stone and fixed in the floor with lime or (now) cement.

Further to the north of these platforms is the group of granaries ranging in two symmetrical rows of six with a central passage 23′ wide. They are built upon a raised platform of rammed mud, about 4′ high, revetted along the eastern and western sides and the south-end with baked bricks. The approach to the granary lay probably at the northern end which suggests the use of water-transport for the incoming or outgoing supplies of grain.

The granary block as a whole is carefully built. "The floors of the individual granaries were carried clear of the ground on sleeper walls three to each unit. In at least two instances the central sleeper had rectangular thickenings as though to carry posts or piers for additional roof-support. The purpose of the sleepers...was to provide intervening air-ducts to keep the overlying building dry and so to prevent sweating and mildew." Central passage with short flights of brick steps was provided, possibly for use for some other purposes, as a number of carefully laid brick-floors might suggest. As the general level rose, in order to prevent choking up, the air-ducts were provided with small projecting air-vents, conducting from the higher level. The area covered by the granaries is about 9000 square feet. As will be noticed, Harappa Mound F must be counted as a part of the citadel by virtue of the buildings situated on it, which at Mohenjo-daro are situated actually on the citadel mound itself.

At Mohenjo-daro too, the artificial platform on which the citadel is built is made of mud brick and mud. Portions of the defences and the towers have been excavated. Earliest of the towers was contemporary with the platform. Within the citadel the most famous structures are the granary, the great bath, an assembly hall, and the 'College' building. The granary originally consisted of twenty-seven blocks of brick-work of varying but regulated size, the northernmost range having been enlarged in the process of construction. "The criss-cross layout of passages between the blocks ensured the circulation of air beneath the main

body of the granary overhead. This superstructure had consisted of massive timberwork, and the vertical chases in the eastern and southern blocks had presumably been intended to carry a timber stair or ramp. The external walls of the podium are battered or sloped... Along its northern side is a brick platform, integral with the main building with a brick-floored alcove near its western end. The walls of this platform are similarly battered save for the innermost wall of the alcove which is vertical, to facilitate the hauling up of bales deposited beneath." The granary was contemporary with the citadel mound, but was earlier than the Great Bath, since a corbelled drain of the latter cut across and mutilated the eastern end of the loading platform. "The granary with its outstandingly massive construction, its careful ventilation, and its vivid provision of loading facilities from outside the citadel is a significant element in the citadel-plan."

The Great Bath is a tank 39′ long, 23′ broad, and 8′ below the paving of a courtyard on to which opened a corridor. The bath could be approached from north and south by flight of brick steps, formerly furnished with timber treads set in bitumen or asphalt. At the base of the northern staircase was a low platform and a small further step. The floor of the bath was of bricks set on edge in gypsum mortar to ensure against any leakage of water. The sides were similarly mortared and to ensure against any possible leakage a course of bitumen one inch in thickness was given behind the facing-bricks. This course of bitumen was in turn retained by mud-brick pasted between it and an outer baked-brick wall. The bath water was drained through a corbel-arched drain opening on the western side of the mound. The bath was supplied water from a well situated in one of the rooms ranged on the back of the three sides of the verandas. Across a lane on the north was a block of eight small bathrooms arranged in two rows on each side of a passage along which ran a drain. "These bathrooms each about 9½ x 6 feet had been carefully and solidly built with finely joined brick floors drained by runnels communicating with the main drain in the passage." A curious phenomenon is that every bathroom in spite of its small size had a staircase which led probably to an upper storey.

The assembly hall is situated in the southern part of the citadel. It appears to have been a hall of 90 feet square divided from east to west into five aisles by twenty brick piers arranged in four rows of five each. The main entrance lay probably on the north. The general scheme is suggestive of an audience hall. There is yet another unidentified structure, a substantial long building with a 33′ square courtyard on which three verandas open through embrasures. Many of the rooms are brick-paved and there are two staircases.[64]

The nature of buildings on the citadel mound is noteworthy. The

structures on both the mounds, first by the elevation of the mound and secondly, by the variety of uses to which they were put, indicate that the mounds were the seats of the administrative authority. Most of the buildings are built on a grand scale and signify ceremonial as well as public usage. Similar citadels, though probably not of such a grand scale, have been reported from Kalibangan, Kot Diji, Sutkagen-dor and Sotkah-koh, and may have been the regional administrative centres. Although there is no cidadel reported from Lothal, 'a substructure of mud-brick, consisting of twelve blocks, each 12 feet square and separated by channels or air-ducts 3½' wide is probably the base of a granary like that on the citadel of Mohenjo-daro'.[65] Stein has observed traces of fortifications at the Kulli sites of Toji and Mazena Damb and similar walls may have existed on the Siah Damb at Jhani. Majumdar has also recorded 'a fortress or a fortified palace' in his explorations at Ali Murad, a Harappan settlement.[66]

When excavated, the mound of Dabar Kot south of Loralai might also reveal a similar fortified structure. During Mundigak IV, when the transformation of the settlement into a town with massive defensive walls and square bastions of sundried bricks took place, the main mound was capped with an extensive building identified as a palace and another smaller mound with a large temple complex. The transformation may also be traced in other aspects of the material culture like the black-on-red pottery, naturalistic decorative designs, including the pipal leaf motif, the mother goddess figurines and the male head with a fillet round the head.

To these may be added a recent find by Suraj Bhan at Rakhigarhi near Hissar in the Sarasvati basin of Haryana and Punjab. The site is about 130 kms to the east of Delhi and the excavator claims it to be 'the easternmost provincial capital of the Harappan civilisation'.[67]

The existence of the granaries, especially on the scale found at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and Lothal might be suggestive of a system of taxation or tribute in which the central authority, symbolised by the citadel, received a share in the annual produce which was probably gathered together in these state granaries.

Grain bins in private houses in the lower city have been reported by Vats in his excavations at Harappa[68] and by Marshall and Mackay from Mohenjo-daro[69] at different times. The criterion evolved to identify this structure seems to be of a doorless structure, rectangular or circular in shape. Such structures have been detected in many places. The use of these structures as grain bins is proved by the fact that at Chanhu-daro in the Harappan phase the remains of wheat and other seeds are found in a badly carbonized condition, in a structure enclosed by a wall

one brick thick.[70] Besides the actual built bins, large storage jars also might have been used to store the grains, pulses and other items as is the custom in many parts of India to this day. Mackay has also recorded this use of the jars.[71] In addition to these structures, the poor folk might have used grain bins made of basketry work and plastered with mud and cowdung to render them air-tight. All this suggests that in Harappan household quantities of grains were stored and preserved, a rather obvious conclusion!

Possible shops and bazaars are recorded in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa.[72] However, the criterion on which this is based viz. the width of the doors seems to be rather inadequate. If certain implements like balance and weights, bellows, furnaces, etc. professional tools are found, then probably there may be some grounds for such a conclusion.

The multi-roomed and probably multi-storeyed houses with rooms arranged around courtyards is a common feature of Harappan architecture. Houses like House VIII of HR area, A section, or House XIII of VS Area of Mohenjo-daro by their big layout suggest that they might have been meant to accommodate large families, probably joint families. The architectural style reflected in the arrangement of rooms around a courtyard still continues especially in northern India, whereas the Maharashtrian *causopi vāḍā* might correspond to House XIII with its four courtyards. The word *causopi* means a building with four halls probably opening on courtyards. Such houses usually accommodate joint families of several brothers living together, having their meals together and many times having joint sources of income. The very fact that the joint family system still continues to be the basic unit in the Indian villages and also in the business communities of urban areas, one might think it is of ancient origin probably going back to the Harappan days.

Just as the granaries are an evidence of large scale agricultural products which were stocked there, similarly specialisation in other skills can also be envisaged from the implements peculiar to each profession and the finished products. Amongst the crafts may be counted masonry, carpentry, brick-making, pottery, leather-working, bead-making in different mediums, metal-working, ivory-working, wood-carving, architecture and engineering, idol-making, precious stone, metals and shell work, weight-making, seal-carvers, basket, mat, etc. work, weavers, metal-mining, etc., gold-and-silver-smith, jeweller, etc. All these crafts are well documented in all the reports of excavations.

A large number of seals inscribed with pictographs are found at all the Harappan levels of Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Chanhu-daro, Kalibangan, Lothal, etc. sites. The sealings were probably attached to the

packages of goods meant for export or being sent from one place to another in the country. The latter usage seems to be less probable. If that had been the case, some rural sites of the Indus civilization might have yielded some sealings. If the seals were used in the governmental and business transactions, the large number of seals may indicate a sizeable population, at least in the cities and medium size towns, of businessmen in export business as well as government officials.

The last item to be mentioned as the positive evidence consists of the measures of weight and length of standardized and uniform quality. The concluding remarks in Marshall's chapter on 'System of weights at Mohenjo-daro' may be relevant: "A system of weights has been therefore discovered which is identical in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. These weights are with hardly an exception uniform in shape, a rectangular block, cubical in the smaller sizes and in the great majority of cases of the same material—a hard chert. They are well finished with polished faces and occasionally with levelled edges. They are made with much greater accuracy and consistency than those of Susa and Iraq. The system is binary in the smaller weights and then decimal, the succession of weights being in the ratios 1, 2, 1/3 x 8, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 160, 200, 320, 640, 1600. There is no evidence of a sexagesimal system, but between 1 & 32 we find a similar succession of ratios at Susa. The most frequently discovered weight of ratio 16, has a mean value 13.71 gm=211.5 g.t. which shows no relation to the Babylonian shekel or its double. No inscription or mark of value has been found on any of the weights. It is therefore probable (unless marks were originally painted on) that commercial transactions took place between classes of people who were completely ignorant of reading and writing."[73] This is a complete description of the system of weights. However, the validity of Marshall's last remark seems questionable, especially considering the early use of writing in business transactions. Scale-pans were also used and specimens both in pottery and metal have been reported from Mohenjo-daro.[74] Probably this is the earliest balance that is found so far, the next one being from Egypt dated about 1500 B.C.

A measure of length carved on shell has been recorded by Mackay. He has described the features of the unique specimen as follows: "The material of which it is made, namely, shell, is probably the best that could have been used; it is not liable to warp or crack, nor even to be affected by changes of temperature—if, indeed, such an idea as this last ever entered the head of its maker. The only objection to the use of the shell for making measures of length is the obvious one that only short lengths can be procured; but this difficulty could have been obviated by the provision of metal joints. Nine divisions still remain, but how many there were in the unbroken rule we cannot say. It is likely that they were a multiple of five, for the rod is divided up on a decimal system,

groups of ten divisions were marked off by circles and were halved into sub-groups of five. The scale was beautifully made and finished, and its accuracy is remarkable; the division lines were very carefully cut with a thin saw and average 0.02 in. wide and deep. This portion whose divisions average 0.264 in. is now 6.62 in. long by 0.62 in. wide by 0.27 in. thick. Only one side of it is marked. In conjunction with the system of weights, it shows the people of Mohenjo-daro to have reached an advanced stage of mental development, with capabilities of precision and mathematical accuracy in thought and work... There is no evidence at present from either Mohenjo-daro or Harappa of a sexagesimal system having been used... I am inclined to think that possibly a second system of measurement may have been in use, for few of the widths of doorways are actual multiples of the unit marked on the scale that has been found."[75] The accurate measure of length is to be expected amongst the technical attainments of the people capable of building the Great Bath and the granaries, indicating their achievements in monumental architecture. The standardisation of weights may imply rigorous administrative control.

The negative evidence is in the absence of shops or their concentration in the specific quarters of the cities or the absence of any place which can be definitely called market place. The identification of buildings as shops is doubtful. Besides this, coins or even pieces of gold and other metals which could be substituted in place of coins are absent. Ancient Mesopotamian sites are littered with tablets inscribed with all possible details of the transactions and accounts which took place in the land. Such records are conspicuous by their absence in the Indus valley. Probably they did not exist, as none has been reported in any of the excavations. However, another possibility is the perishable nature of the writing material that might have been in use just as the palm leaf was used for writing manuscripts in later days. Although records of the types available on Mesopotamian clay tablets are non-existent in Indus valley, their absence cannot suggest that they were never used.

Before analysing the archaeological data some material available in the Ṛgveda may be discussed. *Niṣka* is mentioned in Ṛgveda several times, though its exact meaning is a matter of controversy. Geldner translates it as pieces of gold, while many other scholars interpret it as a necklace on the basis of expressions like *niṣkakaṇṭha* or *niṣkagrīvī*. Pali has preserved the latter usage of the term in the Jātakas when it had assumed the meaning of 'a golden coin or a weight of gold equal to 15 *suvaṇṇās*'.[76] In Prakrit, it means gold and in Ardhamagadhi it means *suvarṇa* (gold) and coins. It is obvious that Pali tradition is influenced by the Vedic, whereas Prakrit and Ardhamagadhi may represent another tradition, probably the correct one. Geldner's interpretation of *niṣka* seems to correspond to the Prakrit and Ardhamagadhi usage of *niṣka*, i.e.

as gold. Moreover, this interpretation seems to fit in with certain context. As for example in ṚV I.126.2: "Hundred gold-pieces [*niṣka*], hundred horses, obtained immediately from the king being in distress as gift, hundred heads of cattle, I, Kakṣivān from Asura. Upto the skies has he extended his unfading glory." It seems that the poet Kakṣivān, son of Uṣaj obtained a precious gift of hundred gold-pieces, hundred horses, hundred heads of cattle from the Asura king Svanaya Bhavya. Asura is probably used as the eponym of the king and does not refer to the god as interpreted by Geldner. This use of the term has been already discussed in details. The point relevant to the present discussion is the appearance of *niṣka* in the context of an Asura-king. Later, when the *niṣka* became equivalent to Dinar its weight was supposed to be '32 small or 16 large rattis'. Again the proportions in the measure are reminiscent of the proportions in the system of weights in the Indus valley. It is not unlikely that *niṣka* by itself did not mean golden necklace, but just gold and *niṣkin* or *niṣkakaṇṭha* may be a person who is having (an ornament of) gold round his neck or who is wearing gold in some form.

It is not unlikely that during the late Ṛgvedic times cow was the standard for exchange as is reflected in IV.24.9,10 where the scene described is one of the auction of an Indra image, which was being offered for ten cows. The word *vasna*, later replaced by *prapaṇa*, is translated by Geldner as barter order which seems possible. This together with the fact that the wealth of the Paṇis consisted of the cows, hidden in the place beyond the river Rasā, may suggest the possibility of cow as being one of the standards of exchange. It served the function of money, although it must have been pretty cumbersome, expensive and perishable medium of amassing wealth. The economic importance that cow gained as a standard in exchange remained for a long time to come and in later days it assumed a sort of sanctity to the extent that Shivāji, the founder of the Marāṭhā Svarāj, called himself Gobrāhmaṇa Pratipālaka Hindupadapādshaha Chatrapatī Shivāji, i.e. the protector of cow and Brahmin, the emperor of the Hindu-state, etc. Immediately after the days of Ṛgveda and even during the time of Mahābhārata, the king gave cows to the *ṛṣis*, Brahmins etc. as *dakṣiṇā* (fees), they won cows as the prize of their prowess in debates. The cows were so prized that Śunaḥśepa's father was prepared to part with his child for 100 cows, to tie him up to the pole of the sacrificial victim for an additional number and lastly execute him for some more! Cow thus was the symbol of wealth and hence of social prestige. Besides the cow the *niṣka* or the gold-pieces of certain weight might have also formed a standard for exchange, especially gold and other precious metals and stones might have found an important place in the long distance trade, where obviously the standard like cow may have suffered from many practical handicaps.

The absence of records which has been referred to above may become meaningful when the functions of Mitra are examined. It was his primary duty to see that all business compacts (i.e. contracts), which is incidentally the literal meaning of the word Mitra, are executed and the promises kept. Moreover, the problem of evasion of one's duty to another member of the same social group might not have been so acute as might be thought now. As will be shown below, in ancient days a member of a society fulfilled his economic duty or function assigned to him, as a part of his social obligation and not with a view to net economic gain to be had from the bargain. The system which knit together the inmates of a village, as the basic unit of the bigger social structure, was such that reciprocity was of utmost importance. The phrases *Mitro yātayat janān*, Mitra unites people i.e. brings them together in a compact, contract and *yasta āditya śikṣati vratena*, O Aditison, who serves you according to solemn rules (ṚV III.59.1,2), clearly refers to Mitra's role as the Exchequer of contracts and probably the contracts were oral as is suggested by the phrase solemn rules. The present usage of '*vrata*' which is now confined to religious life seems to imply certain amount of voluntariness and may be said to be more of the nature of self-imposed discipline.

Besides this, two officials named Aṁśa and Bhaga are also mentioned in the Ṛgveda. The term Aṁśa means share, portion and also apportioner, whereas Bhaga means distributor or dispenser. In the following discussion, an attempt is made to show that the economic system in the Indus valley was based on reciprocity and redistribution. The functions of the two officers are described in details in Chapter XII.9. Savitā was the third official of the system of redistribution and reciprocity.

Certain details of the material life of an ancient community coupled with the information about some of the activities are available. On the basis of this, we will try to reconstruct, as far as the data permit, the details of societal and cultural pattern in which the interpersonal relations were arranged in order to meet the material needs of the members of the community.

The theoretical and methodological framework for this analysis is supplied by the work of Karl Polanyi and others in the field of economic anthropology. It is obvious that the archaeologists are also now turning to it.[77] In fact, the methodology is likely to yield rich dividends in the archaeological context.

It has been shown above (II.5) that the Paṇis and Vaṇijs, as is suggested by their names, were important links in the economic life of the pre-Aryan community in India. If the functions suggested above are correct, then the Paṇis were the international traders and the Vaṇijs

were the small traders probably within the country. They participated in the international trade, taking the caravans from place to place and in the country also travelled from place to place supplying goods according to demand by bringing them from places where they were in surplus. This transaction may have been based on some kind of barter. Besides these, there were also officials of the government called Savitā, Aṁśa and Bhaga who were probably in charge of the system of redistribution.

Here an attempt is being made to reconstruct the pattern, social and cultural, of arrangements amongst the members of a community which lived both in well-organised and well-administered cities and in villages, which might have formed the agricultural hinterland for these cities. These arrangements are made with a view to bring about the redistribution of goods from hand to hand, to make livelihood, and to create new modes of consumption. This will give us the idea of the common denominator of economic action of this particular community. The first point, then, is to trace the movement of the staples upwards through a system of taxation and also the arrangements at the lowest rung of the ladder i.e. at the village level. Second stage may be to envisage the forms of supplementary economic activity through barter, auction and such other ways of non-market economy. Third stage may be the import trade and the mechanisms devised for reaching these upto the lowest unit i.e. the village.

The existence of the citadels in large cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-daro and also the medium-sized ones like Kalibangan, Ali Murad and others is indicative of a certain hierarchy in the administration for which they stood. It may not be unlikely that the Indus empire was divided in two administrative zones, which were headed by the two large-sized citadels viz. that of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. The zones might have been the eastern zone with Harappa as the administrative centre and western zone, with Mohenjo-daro as the centre. This view may be supported by the trends in potteries which emanated and clustered round these centres in the post-Harappan days,[78] obviously because during the Harappan days, the administrative authority exercised a powerful control over the products, compelling to obliterate all the regional individualism, and standardizing the products into a typological and aesthetic uniformity. The citadels in medium-sized towns might have served the purpose of the regional administrative centres, midway between the villages or the smallest units and the great centres Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. On the basis of this two-tiered system, the existence of a third representative in the form of village-headman of the central authority at the level of the smallest unit may be inferred. This completes the pattern of the central authority by making the arrangement symmetrical. Thus all the headmen of the villages may have been

responsible for collecting the share of the central authority in the produce and for settling the disputes in the villages and other administrative and judicial matters. On the other hand, they may have been responsible to the representative of the central authority in that particular region, which may have exercised control over them.

It is possible, as later discussion shows, to know the exact form of the government, its functionaries, and the manner in which they exercised authority invested in them. It is possible to envisage the social and cultural patterns leading to the fulfilment of the material needs of different members of communities, on the basis of archaeological data correlating the practices reflected in the Ṛgveda, which, as has been shown above, seem to be the product of the pre-Aryan culture in India.

The archaeological material discussed above provides with indications of the system evolved to meet the needs of the community. It may be possible to correlate this with a system which was practised in India till the 19th c. A.D. and to a certain extent even later.

The existence of the granaries at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro has first to be accounted for. What function did these granaries serve? Since the granaries are situated in the citadels, it is apparent that they were controlled by the central authority symbolised by the citadel. How did the central authority collect or come into the possession of all the grains and other products which were housed in these buildings? And to what use were the collected things put? It is a long way between the peasant and the central authority. Who were the functionaries who were involved in collecting the grain from the peasant until it reached the central granary? Between the peasant and other producers were the village-headmen and the representatives of the central authority located in the medium-sized towns. So now the problem really is what must have been the pattern of social and cultural relationship at the village level. Little archaeological data about the typical Harappan villages are available. The concern so far having been mainly with identifying the sites as Harappan. A complete and systematic picture of a typical Harappan village is still lacking. In the absence of such knowledge, the urban sites will be chiefly drawn upon for the relevant data, although this might lessen the validity of the conclusions or the whole picture as such. However, indications so far available of the urban areas suggest that the picture drawn here may not be altogether imaginary.

The existence of the granaries in the citadel complex has always puzzled the archaeologists. A question posed frequently is: What were the means employed by the government to fill the granary? The so-called stereotype products of other kinds like pottery etc. are taken to

indicate a strong central authority which left little incentive for individual to produce more, because ultimately it was the authority who would benefit by this surplus. The question really is: How was the surplus that is envisaged in the existence of the granaries created? From where did the incentive for the creation of this surplus come?

Economic anthropologists would emphasize that there was no 'absolute standard which automatically determines the availability of material resources for institutional development'. The relative surpluses are simply the material means and human services which are set aside or mobilized apart from the existing functional demands which a given social unit makes upon its economy. Since the aim is not to find out the absolute consumption levels over which surpluses occur, it is better to direct the attention to 'the positive factor of the institutional means by which the course of the ongoing economic process is altered to support the material requirements of new or expanded societal roles...! Viewing the problem from this angle, there are definite institutional requirements for the creation of relative surpluses. 'Briefly, the operational facilities, as well as the motivation for separating out, counting up, storing, mobilizing material means and human services must be provided by the institutional framework of the economy if surpluses are to be made available for specific purposes.' According to Raymond Firth, primitive man does not live simply 'by a day-to-day satisfaction of his needs but shows foresight and engages in forms of abstinence'. The real difficulty lies in finding out processes or considerations of such decisions. In other cases, it is the finding of the economic anthropologist that the economic processes are embedded in essentially non-economic institutions. From this it may be obvious that 'the motives and the institutional means for accumulating surpluses would also be of a non-economic character'. The means for the creation of surpluses seems to be fairly direct and obvious in the systems in which the goods and person movements of the economic process are channelled through redistributive institutions. It is shown below that probably the economic system in the Indus civilization was based on reciprocity and redistribution. In such a system the central authority sanctions the locational and appropriational movements, and in return demands tribute, levy assessments, mobilizes labour, decrees consumption standards, etc. In the system based on reciprocity, there is little incentive for the individual to build up surplus as the factor of personal uncertainties. However, prestige might be one factor for the creation of surpluses. These prestige-institutions do not come into existence after the emergence of surplus, but they are woven into the very fabric of the society. Potential surpluses always exist but 'what' counts is the institutional means for bringing them to life'.[79] These means probably are different in different societies.

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might have given to the farmers operational facilities like irrigation, providing the good seeds, manure, implements necessary for agriculture, aids for making shares of the produce and storing. The ways in which the government aided the public will be discussed later on the basis of what is available from literary sources.[80]

The granaries in the citadels, the grain bins in private houses, large houses with one or more courtyards and upper stories, which might have housed large joint families, absence of shops or bazaars, but definite indications of the specialisation by certain members of the community in certain arts and crafts, absence of coinage, particular importance given to cows and bulls, ample indications of international trade, apparent absence of detailed records of the transactions, a definite system of weights and measures and officers with the function of redistribution and apportioning—all point in the direction of a system which might have been based on reciprocation and redistribution and a non-market economy. A similar system was still practised in India till the last century. The three basic units of this social organisation were: the joint family made up of relatives or related members, numbering upto hundred or more; the village consisting of such groups of families, and the castes. The family was a self-sufficient unit under the head or a senior member. It could use the special skills of the artisans, priests etc. whenever necessary. The basic political and social unit was the village. All the economic needs of the village community could be met with within the confines of the village. Caste-system cut across the villages and many things like marriages could take place within a caste-group. The caste-system, as is well known, had a religious sanction.

As far as the concept of joint family is concerned, the word *kula* which denotes a family in Indo-Aryan does not appear in the uncompounded form in Ṛgveda. *Kula-pā*,[81] lit. house-protector, occurs once. *Kula* in the sense of home or house of the family does not occur before the period of the Brāhmaṇas. Although the term has been translated as family by Eggeling[82] the interpretation of the Kāṇva text as house seems to be more relevant and also helpful in reconstructing the history of this social institution. The late appearance of the word might indicate its Indian origin, which may throw light on the social organization of the Aryans. Probably Aryans as semi-nomads were not divided into families, each living under separate roof. The smallest social unit might have been a clan, as Ṛgveda always refers to certain names in plural indicating the group as e.g. Druhyavaḥ and so on. That family was not the basic unit amongst the Aryans is indicated by the use of the term *gotra*. Geldner thinks what is meant is herd, an equivalent of the clan.

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This might include several generations living under the same roof. Since agriculture requires a concerted effort on the part of a group, this kind of organisation might have been a product of agricultural necessity rather than that of a nomadic people. Such an organization eliminates or diminishes the necessity of hired labour, unless the land-holding is substantially big so that the members of the household have to look for help outside for which they might have to pay. Thus the joint family system might have originated with the agricultural need and probably the Aryans took over this form when they took to agriculture themselves.

Further the word *kulapā* might indicate that members of that household functioned under the leadership of an individual, probably a senior member, who represented the household during times of trouble as it is said that 'like the house protector moving with the leader of the hosts'.

Production of food was the main business of the joint family. The joint family supervised the tilling of the land wherever necessary by engaging labour. All the persons thus engaged did their jobs with loyalty. Throughout the year there was no payment for services rendered. Everybody in the village from the servants to the craftsmen did their jobs to the best of their ability whenever called upon. Each activity was carried on according to the custom and tradition of the village, and within the joint family to its traditions, station in life and the judgement of its head.

At the time of harvest, however, the services that have gone into this successful operation of producing food are paid for. Everybody who has participated in the process is allotted a share in the gross produce of the village which should serve to sustain him until the next harvesting. This system of allotment was highly complex. The exact arrangements in distribution and division may vary from place to place. However, there might have been three stages in it. From the standing crop, from the undivided grain heap of each cultivator, and from the heaps after the cultivator had contributed to the central authority's heap. In general, it may be said that certain craftsmen who probably by virtue of their having rendered some essential services in bringing the harvest operation to a success were given a certain additional share than others which they were allowed to cut when the crop was standing. Amongst such craftsmen were the watchman, the blacksmith, the carpenter, the herdsman, the priest, and often the cultivator himself. After the crop was harvested and thrashed by the whole community, the grain from the fields of each cultivator was piled up separately. The ploughman took his share (the variable) plus some additional allowed by general consensus. From each pile each person who had cut or thrashed the crop

took certain fixed share of staples and the best available part of other products counted in sheaf. Then the carpenter, blacksmith, barber, washerman and watchman (note that this is the second allotment to the carpenter, blacksmith and watchman) took their fixed share from each cultivator for each four-bullock plough he owned and half of it for each two-bullock plough. When these shares were distributed, the grain heaps were divided into half, the cultivator retaining one half and the other going to the ruler, subject to further distributions. A part of the ruler's share was returned to the cultivator, another was given to the scribe, some to priest, and a tenth of the remainder was given to the village headman. From the cultivator's remaining heap the blacksmith and carpenter received some more and also the herdsman, but less than the former two, and some went to the scribe. The proportions vary with the number, size and distribution of cultivator's holdings, the number, size and distribution of ploughs, the number of bullocks, the number and distribution of ploughmen, as well as the gross produce.

Thus the joint families and the craftsmen castes were bound together by the reciprocity which was enforced by tradition and custom of the village going back probably to the early days of agriculture. The custom seems to have been clearly based on the necessity of team work. This is group to group dealing, which is based on the two-way (or round the circle) flow of goods, skills etc. The village-groups thus become self-sufficient and mutually supporting. In reciprocity, the concepts of equality, justice etc. in the modern sense are not involved. Redistribution means that the produce of the group is brought together and then parcelled out again to those who have contributed to the operation in different ways. There is implication of equality of treatment, fair shares, or payment of value. The symmetrical patterns of reciprocative relationships may merge with the centralized pattern of redistributive relationships.

The large multi-roomed and more than one-storied houses might have sheltered joint families. The grain-bins in the houses might indicate the need for storing the produce from their own farms. If they were not directly productive members of the community, the grains they received annually from the central authority for the services rendered, had to be stored. This happened only in larger cities. The granary was filled with the produce which the central authority collected as its share, for administration and for protection of the subjects, and redistributed it to the royal household, to the aristocracy and to other craftsmen who performed special services for the king as the central authority.

In short, the equivalents of the later joint-family, the village and castes are available in the big-houses, the villages, and the special skills respectively reflected in the articles of material culture. Now in this system,

he vaṇijs, as traders, were not professional farmers, they might havet bartered the articles from the individual cultivator, collecting it together and bartering it against something in a place where it was wanted but was not available. The implications of this arrangement are that the individual cultivator alone could barter a part of his share of the staples if he had some surplus. In that case alone some private trade would be possible. But as the international trade seems to have been conducted on a pretty large scale, it appears plausible that the Paṇis had some definite source and that condition seems to be fulfilled by their being the private trade bankers. But in fact, it placed them in a better position than the farmer-producer, as they seem to have acquired more wealth than others.

The apparent absence of records in the archaeological data can be accounted for by relating it to the system of proportions or shares, which was not confusing to the participants because of the operational device of set proportions like one seer in a maund or one seventh of the heap etc. Moreover each step in the distribution was carried out separately, the same process having been repeated in each case. The exact system of weights and measures found in the Harappan empire may be recalled here and its function in the shares can be easily envisaged. "Each village participated in the division of the grain heap. There was no bargaining, and no payment for specific services rendered. *There was no accounting*, yet each contributor to the life of the village had a claim on its produce and the whole produce easily and successfully divided among the villagers."[83] That there was no accounting probably in the later system even when the writing was known which is exactly the case in Harappan civilization. Writing was known to the Harappan people but the seals and sealings are not found in the remote sites, they are confined to the larger towns and cities. This means that at the village level probably no accounts were found necessary and that the distribution of exact proportions which were probably decided by the central authorities was made with the help of balance and weights etc. The share of the central authority was passed on to the village-headman who, after retaining his own share, passed it on to the regional centre which after retaining its own share, passed on the rest, to the main centre/s. So in general, the problem of accounting did not crop up. This is probably the reason of their absence in the Indus valley. The use of the seals and sealings might have been confined to international trade and government business.

The problem of justice involved in this system may be discussed here briefly. As far as this system of reciprocity and redistribution is concerned, there were built-in devices by which each villager was assured of minimum income. Because of the system of proportions he could always get not a fixed amount but in proportion to the main quantity of

produce. But in times of scarcity, this same proportion could give them the minimum even if it was not enough to support them. But then the rest of the workers who had participated in the operation of the produce have also had less. So, no individual really suffered or really gained. The system pays little attention to 'economic rationality' in the distribution, except probably in the case of blacksmith, carpenter, herdsman. That the enemies of the Aryans were not unacquainted with the idea of justice is apparent from the praises bestowed on Varuṇa, apparently the Asura sovereign, for his ordinances and the justice meted out to his subjects as well as for the maintenance of moral order.

Side by side with this system of reciprocity and redistribution might have existed a system of barter or a non-market economy which may be ultimately linked up with the international trade. Within the country the surplus of a family in the staples might have been exchanged to meet those needs which may, in this case, be called luxuries as the basic needs are likely to have been satisfied within the confines of the village itself. These might be of varied nature like ornaments of precious metals and stones, vessels of metal, weapons, cloth of different kind, meat and fish (unless the butcher and the fisherman are also included in the annual share; however, as the dāśas were an important section of the community, it is not unlikely that a few families might always have formed a part of the village especially of those situated on the banks of the rivers, ponds and such other water-reservoirs), idols, shell-products. There might have been definite rates of exchange laid down by the administration which may be envisaged on the basis of the accurate system of weights. Besides this some form of auction was also probably in vogue with the cow as the standard of exchange, as has been seen in the case of the auction of the Indra-image against ten cows. There is no contradiction involved in having a two-fold system, the staple as the means of payment and a standard of exchange like the cow. 'In Babylonia, during Hammurabi's time, barley was the means of payment; silver was the universal standard; in exchange of which there was very little, both were used alongside of oil, wool and some other staples.' Just like the silver standard in Babylonia, the *niṣka*, gold was probably the third standard used in the Asura empire.

The international trade, indications of which have been discussed earlier, may probably have been conducted by the central administrative agents. This is suggested by the location of the granaries with an easy approach to the Indus river-system, useful for collection of produce in the granaries and for export to other countries. By what mechanism the imported articles reached downwards to the villages is not quite clear. However, it may be possible to envisage the system of redistribution. Beginning with the top it probably went down to the village headman level, each retaining the share for his unit or region. To find out how this

redistribution system worked, it is necessary to know the exact articles imported in the Indus valley, and in what proportions these were found on the sites further away from the two cities. According to Karl Polanyi, the two systems viz. of collecting the exports and distributing the imports may have gone along separate lines, as suggested by two separate names of two officers viz. Aṁśa, apportioner and Bhaga, distributor.

If the Paṇis were as rich as Ṛgveda tells us and participated in trade activity, they were probably the big businessmen and private bankers, and were probably equal to *ummeanum* in Assyria during Hammurabi's time who provided goods, lent money, invested sums over a long term against interest. His role has been summed up by Karl Polanyi as 'a public figure' whose 'investments and partnerships are what we might call treasury advances'.[84] The Paṇis had probably a similar status which will explain their wealth and their stinginess. This interpretation can also be supported by the business activities of the Bania community who Kosambi thinks is identical with the ancient Paṇis. The Vaṇij was a small trader who might have been instrumental in getting goods from one place and delivering them where they were in demand. For these delivery services he might have charged some fees. But if he had been an official, he might have received something from the central authority for his duties. His function is indicative of the non-market economy. The fact that the granaries of Harappa and Mohenjodaro are situated on the citadel near the river bank probably points to at least a part of the trade being directly controlled by the central authority.

The dāśas as sailors and Paṇis as professional bankers and tradesmen might have played important part in the foreign trade. This also may have enabled them to amass fortunes, at least, more than those engaged in other occupations. The wealth consisted of cows and probably also the precious metals like gold and silver. Although ingots of gold and silver have not been excavated but large number of ornaments of gold, silver and precious stones and vessels of silver, indicate the use of these precious metals and stones probably as the prestige symbol. In India, to this day, the ornaments of women made of precious materials enjoy prestige value and it could not be very different in the Harappan days. The wealth thus amassed and displayed through recognised social channels, in turn gave them prestige in the society, which probably resulted in their having 'certain honorific duties and public trustee functions which result in making available to the community services and material means which would not otherwise be put to use'. This was true of all the functionaries of the government of the Asura empire. All of them are praised throughout Ṛgveda for their generosity. This generosity was both the cause and the result of their social position. Although the

Paṇis are many times condemned for their niggardly behaviour, their chief, Bṛbu, is praised in superlatives for his bountiful gifts. In fact, the emphasis in Hinduism on free voluntary gift, *dāna*, given by the rich to the needy and poor, seems to serve the social function of sharing the surplus of the rich with the poor. To a certain extent it gives the rich man in return social prestige, with foundations in a religious institution.

5. Agriculture in the Indus Valley

As has been discussed in Chapter VIII, there is sufficient evidence to prove that the devas destroyed the people who had settled down on the banks of the Indus and its tributaries. They were agriculturists, *carṣaṇis* as distinct from nomads.

The direct indications of agriculture in the Indus valley by way of different implements used are probably few. But the existence of granaries and grain-bins in private houses, mortar and pestle, the spade and a broken sickle, the saddle-querns for grinding the corn etc. may be counted in the evidence, the plough or harrow being conspicuously absent.

The presence of the granaries of the scale found at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and Lothal bespeaks of large agricultural produce which was stored there. In fact, Marshall said, "great cities with teeming populations like Mohenjo-daro and Harappa could never have come into being save in a country which was capable of producing food on a big scale, and where the presence of a great river made transport, irrigation and trade easy".[85] With these two important indications of an extensive and efficient agriculture and other minor pieces of evidence, a reconstruction of the method of agriculture evolved in the Indus valley may be possible.

Amongst the concomitants of agriculture may be counted semi-tropic climate, dry-lands, a water-supply easily controlled by man—alternatively the knowledge of the onset of monsoon in tropical countries —ability to select seeds, conservation of domestic plants, fertilizers, domestication of draft animals, the hoe, the plough, sickle, and thrashing implements. It is not only necessary to have all these things together but the ability to carry out the successive operations at the right time is the primary need. This implies a concerted effort on the part of the community or a group from the beginning of the process viz. ploughing or using the digging stick or burning it. The right timing at every stage being essential for the success, the instruction is also necessary.

From amongst the concomitants noted above, those which are

directly available are the fertile silty semi-dry land and semi-tropic climate. The banks of the Indus and its tributaries are exceptionally productive on account of the layers of silt deposited every year by the floods. "The whole of this tract several hundreds of miles in length and upto one hundred in breadth, as we know it, has been carried and fixed in position, grain by grain, layer upon layer, by the water of the Indus. The soil trodden by the inhabitants of Mohenjo-daro, and by whatever predecessors they may have had, was indistinguishable from the soil we tread today; Indus silt, modified by the action of heat, water and vegetation, stretching away in seemingly boundless flat expanse to the confines of the valley. Only, the land they knew some fifty centuries ago lay many feet below the present level of the plain of today; it met the sea far inland of present coast line;..."[86] Thus the land and climate were favourable for cultivation.

Next item viz. the easily controllable water supply was doubly essential because of the small amount of rainfall in Sindh and Baluchistan. In Baluchistan, several stone dams were built across water courses and between rocky outcrops in the valleys evidently with the object of storing and holding up of water for agricultural purposes. The gabrbands in Sind, Kohistan and Baluchistan are attributed to the Zoroastrians or the 'Wudwas', great or old people who were, according to the oral tradition recorded by Bartle Frere, 'rooted out by Mahomed bin Quassim when he conquered Sind'. He was told that the capital of these ancient people was 'Hubb Sarona', that their city was older than Bela, which boasts of a history of 3000 years, and that they worked the lead mines at Kundraj. This plain of Sarona lies immediately to the west of the valley of the Hab river. In this plain are found the most elaborate gabrbands. The southern portion of Sarona valley is by far the largest patch of cultivable land in Southern Jhalawan, and the ancient inhabitants improved its natural capabilities by such magnificent works as the Ahmed Bund and Pir Munaghara dam.

The description indicates that the population to which the gabrbands are attributed was a settled, agricultural population with a certain degree of civilization and was familiar with the notion of city. In fact, it seems to bear close resemblance to the description of the Indus civilization. As said above, the Avesta represents the tradition of the Asuras driven away from the Indus valley by the Aryans and thus the attribution to the Zoroastrians would only imply that these were the Asuras who either came here after their defeat in the Indus valley or were already here and were not destroyed by the Aryans. To the later generations they came to be known as Zoroastrians. Moreover the constructive ability reflected in the construction of these elaborate dams is characteristic of the Asuras in the Indus valley. The style of the buildings on the sites of ancient towns in various places in the valley and its vicinity

corresponds, according to Buller, to those of the 'stone enclosures' that is the gabrbands.

The gabrbands are ancient dams attributed to Zoroastrians by the local population of the regions of Baluchistan. Whether the dams were built for storage and/or irrigation is not clear. *Gabr* is said to mean Zoroastrians or fire worshippers. The word is Persian and means 'one of the Magi of the sect of Zoroaster, stone, helmet' etc.[87] *Band* (Persian) is a dam. It appears from the general sense that probably the gabrbands were used as percolation tanks to hold the water of torrential rain. If the water is stored in the upper part of the stream the area around would benefit by its percolation below surface which may explain the existence of wells—at least one such well is recorded—in the area. This existence of the wells as a source of water, especially for drinking purposes, might have depended on the underground water springs, replenished through these percolation tanks.

Bands are found in regions where the rainfall is higher and fairly regular. One such band, a modern construction, exists in Poona. The water is not used for irrigation. In rainy season when the water level increases the water flows over the solid band. In summer, the level of water is not as high as in rainy season but is maintained at a certain constant level to serve many purposes. The gabrbands were probably put to similar use. The literal meaning of the word *gabrband* may be a stone-dam, which is testified by the material used for building these structures. Different methods have been used in the construction of these dams which seem to have scattered over the mountainous terrain of Baluchistan in hundreds.

Buller has classified four methods. 'The most common form is a series of platforms, from 2 to 4 feet high, rising in successively receding steps and gradually narrowing towards the top. Each of these platforms was made by the construction of two parallel walls with roughly shaped stone, the blocks varying in size from a foot to two feet square and the interval between the walls being filled with mud, rubble and gravel. The next platform is less wide, the decrease in size varying in different places; sometimes it is 8 feet narrower i.e. 4 feet on either side, sometimes it is only about a foot. On the upper side i.e. the side towards the declivity, from which the rush of water would come, the steps thus formed have been filled in, either naturally or artificially, by stones and rubble piled against them. This type of dam is very commonly met with in the Hab river valley.' The second type is made out of very large slabs of stone which have been roughly shaped and are set together with great regularity, the larger chips obtained in dressing the stones, being used to fill in the iterstices and to keep the boulders in position. Some of the boulders used are 4′ by 2½′ by 1½′ in size. On the upper side of the boulders

additional breastwork was formed from the smaller chips of the stones, clay and rubbish. The third consists of a massive stone wall supported by buttresses on the lower side and having a sloped breastwork on the upper.[88] The length of the dams varies according to the width of ravine or valley across which they are usually constructed. As for example the Bahlur or Bahlol valley, the gorge is about 110 feet wide and the broken dam, the still standing part of which is about 80′ in length and 70′ in height. 'The dam was constructed with horizontal layers of stones brought from the neighbouring hills and mixed with mud and gravel; the whole appears to have been faced by large stones... On the upper side is a sloping breastwork. The dam, after it had been built, appears to have been instrumental in collecting enough water to enable the residents to cultivate rice, a thing which not now thought of...'[89] Another dam, north Musefari Lak, near Kotiro in the Hab valley has an average breadth of about 100 feet and height of 30 feet. The Ahmad gabrband in Sarona valley has a wall and breastwork still standing of 2350′ in length and is built with certain amount of skill. The original length was 3241 feet. This dam is composed of a wall 5′ x 6′10″ made of massive stones on the lower side with a sloping breastwork on the upper. The stones are of fairly uniform measurements. They were evidently quarried on the trap hill at a place called Ahmad Dhor, 300-400 yards from the west end of the dam. Pir Munaghara dam encloses a large area sufficient to form a reservoir. It is constructed in two sections of two different styles. The west section, 1166 feet long, consists of a wall 15½ feet high rising in ten tiers, with 12 feet wide at the top and at the bottom about 24′. The width of the wall with the breastwork may be about 150 feet. In the centre are remains of what was obviously a sluice or escape channel. The dam was probably breached at an early stage and is repaired with a buttressed wall and breastwork which met the first wall at an obtuse angle close to the site of the sluice. The buttresses are circular in some cases and rectangular in others. The rectangular ones are 10 feet square. The blocks of stone used in making the wall are 4′ x 2′ x 4′. The whole length as reconstructed is 3087′ excluding the eastern portion. Buller's comment is: 'Such a work, though built without mortar, would do honour to the engineering skill of the present day'.

The work of this scale must have served some important purpose for the people. A certain amount of organization and technological know-how is evident. The fact that constructions on such immense scales were undertaken may imply the gains to be bigger than the cost. Probably they served two purposes. First is the soil conservation and second behind at least the bigger ones, may be water storage and preservation. As has been emphasized by Buller, the total average rainfall in this area does not exceed 7 to 10 inches which comes in heavy storms in July and August. Raikes and Dyson have argued that the weather may not have undergone a major change and that it may not have been very different

from what it is now. If this is so, what was the purpose of these immense dams in this arid area? Even if the total rainfall is gathered, it will not fill the dams. So obviously there must have been some other additional source of water, probably the underground springs of water. These engineers who had the skill to build these dams, probably knew the technique of tapping the underground resources.

It might be worthwhile to examine at least some of the gabrbands from this point of view. Tradition goes that large parts of Afghanistan and north-western regions of the Indian sub-continent which are now arid because of scanty rainfall were earlier prosperous and green. The inhabitants of the places had known the sources or springs of underground water which they tapped and made the land habitable by establishing a network of these channels. At the advent of the Muslims and the subsequent persecution of the population, when the original inhabitants decided to leave the country, out of sheer revenge, they closed these water-channels before leaving. Such legends are also heard in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, now a chronically famine area. During medieval times it was a flourishing town with the underground water supply through channels now seen in certain places. Probably such a system was known in Baluchistan too which will also explain the existence of wells in that region of which one was located by Buller on a site in Bahlur. Moreover, in Quetta valley the subterraneous water channels are known as *Gabr-i-karez*. *Karez*, a Persian term, means 'a subterraneous canal, a sewer, a ditch dug round a field to convey water'. These channels were still operative in 1903-4. These underground water-channels are also associated with the same people as the builders of the dams. So it seems plausible that there might have been some sources of underground water which out of sheer disuse are now lost to the local people. From the point of view of solving the problem, it may be worthwhile to do some field work on these or similar lines. The descriptions of gabrbands by Stein also give the impression that the bands were meant for the conservation of soil as well as preservation of water for irrigation purposes. It is not unlikely that the alluvial soil carried by torrential stream was first deposited in the band creating a level of soft soil, which probably could be removed from time and again to the fields. Otherwise, there was every likelihood that the band would be filled within a few years' time leaving little space for water to gather. Another purpose may be to preserve the water and use it for irrigation purposes. The water absorbed slowly either behind the band or downstream could be made available through the subterranean springs called *karez*. This line of investigation might prove fruitful especially when it is known that the art of finding the *karez* is supposed to be ancient and well-established.

The conclusion drawn by Hargreaves is also noteworthy from a

different angle as he tries to establish a relationship between the Nal cultures and the gabrbands: '... when this Nal culture flourished physical conditions were more favourable than today not necessarily because the rainfall was markedly heavier than now, but because the then inhabitants by concerted action more carefully assisted in the formation of alluvial soil over the dry and rocky substratum thus preventing the erosion which today tends to leave only a barren and gravelly surface and it is, in all probability, to this stone using race should be attributed the ancient gabrbands so numerous in Jhalawan and other parts of Baluchistan'. The skull types are classified as Mediterranean and Mongoloid which both are found at Mohenjo-daro also.

However, Lambrick has tried to make out a strong case for the ancient origin of the bands between 3000-1000 B.C. In the circumstantial evidence cited by him in support of this is probably the connection between the bands and the prehistoric settlements in the vicinity. These dams made agriculture on a larger scale, large enough to support the settlements, possible. Moreover, these settlements might have occupied the sites for a long period as is indicated by the height of the mounds. If these settlements and the bands are to be treated as works of different periods, then serious problems arise: What are the other artefacts left by the builders of the bands? And was the population which was spread over several mounds able to support itself without the aid of soil-conservation or irrigational works? Further, did the builders of the dams build them without any direct benefits from this tremendous building activity? Could they in that remote past afford to stay far away from these dams? All these seem to be commonsense questions but cannot be avoided. The settlements consist of houses built largely of stones which still seems to correspond pretty well with the engineering skill displayed by the builders in the dams. Thus it seems possible that village communities were also skilled in agriculture and engineering and took the trouble to adapt the neighbouring terrain to agriculture.[90] Hargreaves who conducted the excavations in Baluchistan held this view[91] which was corroborated by the findings of Sir Aurel Stein's work in Gedrosia[92] especially in Kharan at Toji where there was a close relation in origin and date between the gabrbands and village sites. Although no dams or bands or any other irrigational works have been reported from the Indus valley proper, it is very likely that some irrigation facilities existed, the traces of which probably were lost on account of the continuous deposition of silt carried by the river year after year. In fact, as the literary sources indicate there might have been a dam of considerable size at the confluence of the seven rivers, the destruction of which is attributed to Indra. The obvious intentions in building this huge dam must be agricultural. Thus it may be said that the water supply was readily available to the Harappans for agricultural purposes as well as they possessed the necessary technological skill to make the best use of the available natural resources.

The other possible source of water supply is the irrigation network. The lack of irrigation channels has been frequently noted. Even an aerial survey of the Indus valley has not revealed much. However, looking at the map of the Indus bed, so many islands are noticeable on the Indus current which almost always coincide with the point of conjunction of smaller rivulets joining the main current. Are all these islands formed out of the silt deposited by the Indus or the smaller tributaries? Or, are they natural rock formations in the bed? There is a third possibility, which can be confirmed only after a close examination by the geologists, that at least some of these islands might have initially been artificial walls probably erected to divert the stream for irrigation purposes. In fact, going a step further, the nature of innumerable traces of the beds of currents and the common phenomenon of the so-called change in the river beds might really reveal a complex network of irrigation works and canals. The physical map of Sindh records innumerable dry beds for short stretches and of course, the case of the river Ghaggar-Sarasvatī-Hākrā which was an important stream in the ancient river system. It is also surprising (especially to a layman who does not understand the complexities of hydrology and geology) that such big currents as is presented by the bed of Ghaggar at Kalka at the foot of Siwalik hills should simply disappear in the sands of Rajasthan. It seems possible that Hakra which is derivable from Ghaggar (Skt. *ghargharā* onomotopoeic word representing probably the noise of water flowing through hilly regions), was river parallel almost to the Indus and that probably in ancient days, as can be seen from the old bed of Sutlej which rose near about Rupar at the foot of the Siwalik hills, Ghaggar-Sarasvatī were joined by Sutlej on the one hand and Yamuna contributed its floods to Chitang. This system alone can explain the width of the Hakra bed of about two miles in Bikaner and Bahawalpur territory, for a distance of 150 yards due to the flooding from one of the great snow-fed rivers of the Himalaya.[93]

Though not much work has been done on this problem, some of the findings of Raikes support the suggestion made above. In his article on 'Kalibangan: death from natural causes', he has put forth following general hypothesis, based on the calculations, 'which is of alternating capture of the Yamuna by the Indus and Ganges systems respectively. That low and almost indiscernible watershed between the two systems and the slow migration westward of the Yamuna across its flood plain under the influence of *cariolis* force (or deflection force due to the earth's rotation) would result inevitably in a right bank avulsion somewhere near where Indri now stands.'[94] Although it is difficult to accept the causes stated in the latter part of the hypothesis, what is of interest is the alternating capture of the Yamunā by the Indus and Gaṅgā.

Here it may be worthwhile to remember the narrative of Bhagi-

ratha, a descendant of King Sagar, who is said to have brought through Herculean effort the Gaṅgā from heaven to the earth.[95] This story clearly states that Gaṅgā was not where we find her now. She was not in fact on the earth. Her having been in heaven really creates the difficulty. Before identifying heaven, a suggestion for further investigation may be made here and that is probably during the prehistoric days the Gaṅgā and Yamunā in the Himalayan region flowed in Ghaggar or Sarasvatī which is geographically possible. Later on Bhagiratha changed the course of Gaṅgā and probably with it Yamunā, making them flow separately and eastwards rather than into Ghaggar or Sarasvatī. This is probably the reason why these rivers went dry. Investigations by hydrologists in the Upper Himalayan regions should throw light on this.

Yet another source of water supply was the wells which are found practically in every house in Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. It is likely that wells were used for irrigation purposes also. As has been seen above, a kind of stone-wheel was used to draw the water from the wells. No stone-wheels are reported from any of the Harappan sites. However, the round stones with a central whole (through which a pole or log of wood could be passed) have been found. They have been attributed ritual function but recently it is proposed that these stones might have served as balance in *shaduf* or *lāṭ* which is not impossible. But *shaduf* or *lāṭ* in a house would be a rather cumbersome machine occupying lot of space. *Shaduf* was known to the Harappans as an engraving on a seal at Mohenjo-daro[95a] is found. Although it is difficult to envisage the use of a stone-wheel for drawing water it may be of interest to note that certain jars with deep grooves around the middle of their bodies are reported from Mohenjo-daro. They are found frequently and are always made roughly. Mackay has suggested that the jars were probably made for attachment to an appliance for raising water very similar to the wheel used in Iran, Iraq, etc. at present. These jars were found around public wells. The suggestion was unacceptable to Marshall and probably, correctly.[96] There is another device current in India, which is also a kind of wheel. In fact two wheels are joined together by sticks at the circumferences. Handles are attached to circumferences and set up on two slanting supports. The rope is tied to a horizontal joint with the bucket at the other end. The rope winds round the horizontal joints as the wheels are turned round with the handles. This is called *rahāṭ* in Marathi which seems to be the same word as *lāṭ*. This device is usually used on wells for domestic purposes. For agricultural purposes the device used is a leathern bag which is drawn over a pulley by a pair of bullocks.

The draft animals, viz. bull, were domesticated by the Harappans as is evidenced by the engravings on the innumerable seals and the

bones found on the sites. The cow-dung might have been used as manure as well as fuel.

The evidence of the agricultural implements at the Harappan sites is conspicuously absent. Here the implements like plough and its share, the hoe, spade, sickle and the like which form the equipment of agriculture are meant. There are one or two broken metal pieces which might have been sickles.[97]

But plough or ploughshare and 'spades which one expects to find are completely missing'. This, however, does not mean that the Harappans were ignorant of these essential implements for agriculture. Indications of their knowledge of plough, may be found in the wide use of bullock-carts which, according to social scientists, seems to be "chiefly associated with plough agriculture". Another important factor on which depended the greatness of ancient civilizations is wheat of which two varieties found at Harappa are Triticum Compactum and Triticum Sphaerococcum. The basis of the old civilization is to be sought in the combination of wheat, plough, ox and cart which are found together in the ancient Egypt and Babylonia, and it is likely that since all the other factors were present, the plough also might have been there. Another possible reason for the absence of plough might be that the plough was made of wood completely and that the wood has simply rotten away without leaving any trace behind. Ploughs made of wood alone are still used in India. As a matter of fact, four types of ploughs are currently used in India: The head and body[98] of type A are continuous and the two together are horizontally disposed. The beam and handle are attached independently to the body. This form and its variants are found all over Jammu and Kashmir, the whole of Himachal State, parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Mysore in south. In type B, the body and the handle are continuous, while the head which may or may not be comparatively large in size, is set at an obtuse or right angle to the body. The area covered by this form and its varieties is whole of Rajasthan, Punjab minus the Himalayan districts, western Uttar Pradesh, large parts of western Madhya Pradesh, Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat, and Akola, Yeotmal etc. in Maharashtra. Type C is formed with the head obliquely set in the body, both being generally carved out of one piece of wood. The handle may be said afore or aft of the body, while the beam may or may not pass through the handle in the process of being fixed to the body. This type is used all over the Peninsula, and extends in north west Gujarat, Orissa in the east and practically all over Bihar upto the northern mountain border of India. Type D consists of the head obliquely set in the body as in type C, the distinction with the latter lying only in the fact that the handle is continuous with the body. Often, the whole plough, except the beam, may be carved out of one piece of wood. This type is distributed all over West Bengal, Assam, Manipur,

Tripura, Singbhum in Bihar, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Phulbani in Orissa, and parts of Madhya Pradesh. In this zone the plough with a share of split bamboo is found.

As has been pointed out above, in ṚV *śunā* means ploughshare and hymns are addressed to the *śunāsīra*, share and plough. The word is of obscure origin.

From the descriptions of Atharvaveda where the plough is said to be *pavīravam* or *pavīravat*, sharp-edged or having a metallic point like spear or arrow, the existence of the metal ploughshare is testified. Although the tradition might be late, the word *pavīravat* derived from *pavī* is of doubtful origin, and is also applied to the thunderbolt of Indra. In any case, it would support the Indian origin of the word.

Archaeologically the use of plough can be testified in the pre-Harappan levels at Kalibangan where a ploughed field in well-stratified context has been excavated by B.B. Lal.[99] According to the excavator, this is probably the first field of its kind to be found in excavations. If the observations of the excavator are correct and if such a discovery is archaeologically possible, the use of plough was known in the Harappan period. The terms for plough and share i.e. *lāṅgala*, *phāla* etc., borrowals from the Muṇḍā languages, may throw light on the ethnic affiliations of some sections of pre-Harappan population as proved also by the dancing girl bearing Austroasiatic features and as is indicated by the skeletal remains. Thus there is plenty of circumstantial evidence pointing to the use of plough by the Harappans. As no specimen of the plough has, however, been reported from any of the sites which may be due to the plough being made of hard and heavy wood or due also to the fact that the proper place to look for plough or its metallic part the share should be the village with agricultural population and not big cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, it is rather difficult to say anything about the type of plough used by the Harappans.

However, the distribution zone of type A coincides suspiciously for the larger part with the region where the Indus culture had flourished. If the breed of the ox is any indication for the type of plough used in the area, as observed in the Anthropological survey publication,[100] there might have been two types. First is the heavy type plough preferred by the Punjabi farmers. It penetrates deeper into the ground than the lighter one, the condition being that strong cattle alone can drag it, and the lighter type, wherever the cattle is of smaller size. Both exist even now side by side.

Amongst the threshing implements the existence of the threshing floors on the mound adjacent to the citadel has been noted. The equip-

ment consisted of the mortar and pestle both probably made of wood. The wooden mortar had rotten away but the surrounding brick work survived in tact. Once again in Sanskrit words *ulūkhala*, *khala* and *musala* are borrowals, origin being as yet a matter of controversy.[101]

The winnowing fan known in Sanskrit as *śūrpa* may also be a borrowal and the saddle quern and muller which might have been used for grinding are reported frequently from the Harappan sites. Marshall thought that it was used for grinding the corns etc., the round grinder being unknown.[102]

ŚB I.6.1.2-4 clearly attributes the agriculture to the Asuras. In fact, the demand for sacrifice by the seasons and subsequent desertion by them indicates that probably the Aryans were not well versed in the change of seasons which the Asuras knew. Naturally, agricultural activity which depends so much on the onset of monsoon and its steady continuation especially in the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab must have been a hazardous enterprise without knowing it.

The Harappans knew two varieties of wheat, the club wheat and the Indian dwarf wheat, barley, sesamum and peas. At Lothal and Rangpur are found the rice husks and spikelets embedded in clay pottery.

Amongst the domesticated animals which are important to agriculture as draft animals may be counted two species of bulls the short-horned Indian bison or gaur which is frequently mentioned in the ṚV. It is found depicted on the seals.[102] The other species i.e. gavaya (Bos gavaccus) is not recorded in the excavations whereas the Brahmani bull or zebu (Bos Indicus) with hump and heavy dewlap occurs fairly frequently in the depictions on the seals but is not mentioned in the ṚV. The buffalo is found in rare depictions and is also mentioned in ṚV.

The conclusion drawn by Kuiper from the linguistic evidence discussed in his article is that 'the vast majority of the Ṛgvedic loan words belong to the spheres of domestic and agricultural life. They belong not only to the popular speech (which has never been questioned) but as far as they allow any decision at all, to the specific *language of an agrarian population*.'[103] The fact that the Aryans felt the necessity of borrowing words from another language and specially in certain spheres demonstrates the Aryan ignorance of these articles and their use. The fact that they were borrowed from another language where they were probably found ready-made indicates that the population which used the other language/s had developed the use of these articles along with the techniques in agricultural and other spheres. Thus although the direct evidence in the form of plough or share is not found

in archaeological data, ample indirect evidence of various stages in the process of agricultural production as developed by the pre-Aryan population can be gathered.

6. The floods and destruction of the Indus Civilization

As has been shown in Chapter III.1, ṚV clearly refers to the existence of a dam which was built by the Asuras across the combined flow of the seven tributaries of Indus. The dam is referred to in the Ṛgveda directly as dam and metaphorically as the mountain, on which lay Vṛtra who probably guarded the sluice valves of the dam which are referred to as the *bila*, hole. Indra, after killing Vṛtra, took hold of the sluice valve which he opened and allowed the waters of the seven rivers to flow down in a flood, *arṇas*. Indra did not stop after releasing the water once but repeated the performance for some days and autumns. This same action is later epitomised in the Brahmanic ritual of *Pauru-madga*, the inundation of urban or civic (areas).

The literary sources are explicit about the use of the waters of Sarasvatī for defeating the Asuras. The reference to Sarasvatī lending a limb signifies the breaking of dykes built on the banks of Sarasvatı and its smaller tributaries, leading to the inundation of the areas. Archaeologically, no evidence to this effect is available at the moment, although future possibilities cannot be ruled out. In fact, during the excavations in this region, it would be worthwhile to look for possible indications and extent of floods.

Archaeologically occurrence of great floods is recorded in the excavations at the Harappan sites situated on the lower Indus. The northern sites including Harappa are singularly free from this menace. In fact, the destruction of the Indus civilization is attributed to these floods rather than to the Aryan invaders. The floods at Mohenjo-daro are described by Marshall thus: "Our picture however would be wrongly drawn if we imagined Mohenjo-daro free from the havoc of floods; for if there is one fact that stands out clear and unmistakable amid these ruins, it is that the people must have lived in ever-present dread of the river. Then, as now, the Indus was the source of fertility and wealth; on its annual inundation depended in a great measure the crops; on it also the commerce and life of the city. But if it was a beneficent giver, it might equally become the author of desolation and ruin. That this was so is shown by the pains which the builders of Mohenjo-daro have taken to provide their edifices with praeternaturally solid basements and to raise them aloft on artificial terraces which time and again were heightened in order to place them out of reach of the floods...it must frequently have happened that the river came down in abnormal flood, bursting its banks and, in spite of artificial earthworks (if such existed), carrying ruin far

and wide."[101] Marshall attributed much of the ruin to this cause. However, Mackay's observations about the mudbrick platform may counterbalance Marshall's views. Most of these platforms were built in the Inter II phase after the first great flood and some at the beginning of the late II phase after the second flood. They are not as numerous as is generally made out. They do not affect the general levels of archaeological plans. Some of them were of considerable size and costly to build. 'Their presence then argues a high valuation of the positions occupied by them.' The choice of mudbrick seems to be deliberate as the mudbrick platform or the house atop is not affected by its immersion in water as against the burnt brick or even a filling of rough débris which absorbs the water, through its pores.[105]

The houses came to be erected on artificial platforms to avoid their being flooded, a trait similar to the Babylonian houses. Many of the later houses were built upon platforms formed by filling the rooms of earlier houses with unbaked brick, clay or sometimes with refuse from brick-kilns. There were also houses without platforms. Some of them were poorly built. Obviously, the rich could afford to isolate at least some rooms where shelter could be taken in times of danger. In short, the town was open to floods and people were prepared to face this eventuality in ready-made shelters.

Mackay in his excavations at Mohenjo-daro paid more attention to the problem of floods and their stratification. An irregular mound 100 yards beyond the First street, said to be a rubbish heap, gives incontrovertible proof that 'this low ground outside the city was flooded on more than one occasion'. The second trench 40 feet from DK mound reveals at least two levels of sandy clay and stiff clay deposited by flood. The actual stratification given by Mackay is thus:

a. A band of disintegrated brick, reddish in colour, from ground level to about 22′ below datum.
b. Sandy clay deposited by flood; about 2′ thick 22.4′ below datum.
c. Disintegrated brick; about 2′ thick.
d. A layer of rubbish (broken brick, brick potsherds, ashes and humus).
e. A thick bed of stiff clay, deposited by flood, roughly 7′ in thickness above water level.

Thus the layers b and e are the flood layers, the former being the latest and the latter the earliest. The latest flood layer (i.e. b) is correlated with the end of Late III phase, 'at which time the city seems to have been entirely deserted. After its reoccupation, the type of house erected was in general very poor and the art of building steadily deteriorated to

the end of the period.'[106] Another trench the northerly one shows the latest flood deposit superimposed upon the layer of rubbish. There are no layers of disintegrated brick but the water-laid sandy clay extends to about 9′ in thickness.

Similar bands of water-laid clay were noticed between the 'L' mound and the large group of buildings on the southern slope of the Stupa mound. The uppermost stratum was a band of disintegrated brick 1′ thick. Beneath this was a layer of sandy clay about 1′7″ in thickness. Underneath this was layer of disintegrated brick below which was noticed a second flood deposit, at least 7′ thick. The trench which is situated about 900 yards from the DK area is considered to be of 'great value as providing corroborative evidence of the occurrence of at least two floods during the history of the city'.

The water of the floods was spread over the plain west of the Stupa mound as is shown by the water-deposits of clay. The subsidence of the buildings to the north and north-west of the Stupa mound together with the northern end of Main Street points to the close neighbourhood of an easy channel for the approach of flood-water.[107] This means that probably the citadel mound and the surrounding areas at Mohenjo-daro were inundated in water even from the northern side.

The decline in the standards has already been mentioned above. The excavator points out that 'on the reoccupation of the city in the Late II phase, there seems to have been no civic authority for some time. The first comers of the new or returned population, in consequence, took possession and built over the western end of Fore Lane'[108] in the DK Area. Once again the deterioration in the standard of masonry is apparent in the late period especially Phases Ib and Ia, which are mostly poor compared to that of the Intermediate period. 'Towards the end of the Late Period, the whole of the southern portion of the G section of the DK mound became an artisans' quarter, many of whose inhabitants were potters, for no less than six kilns, including one in the middle of central street, were found in this comparatively small area and others have probably been destroyed by denudation. This quarter of Mohenjo-daro, if not the whole of the city, must by this time have declined greatly in social standing and organisation, for it is difficult to imagine that the city authorities—if they still wielded any authority—would have allowed potters to practise their craft within the confines of the city. Throughout the East, the potter is put outside a city so that the smoke of his kilns shall not annoy other people... We have indeed come upon a striking example of the decay of once honourable city, the cause of which we suspect to be the vagaries of the Indus rather than pressure by invaders, of whose existence we have little positive evidence.'[109] It is to be noted that the decline in the civic standards, in the quality of masonry

and so on sets in after the flood in the Late Phase. In other words the floods in the Late Phase, whether caused by nature or otherwise, seem to be the cause of the decline. The decline thus was not really inherent in the civilization itself. If the decline had been inherent in the civilization itself, it would have been apparent in the period after the previous floods. But as is testified in the archaeological remains, the civic authority was in full control of the situation and soon after the recedence of the flood, the life returned to normal. In fact, the precautions taken against the flood might suggest that the authorities and the architects were fully aware of the problem and continued to fight it vigorously. As opposed to this, general deterioration of standards and all-round degeneration after the flood in the Late Phase suggests that the central authority was no more in power, that the floods had crippled it to an unrevivable point.

This is an important point as this was exactly the intention of Indra in releasing the waters of the dam, causing untimely floods. Neither the civic authority of Mohenjo-daro and the downstream settlements nor the people themselves were prepared for this. The only alternative left to them was to flee for their life. Probably that was what they did. Indra repeated his performance several times causing panic and insecurity amongst the citizens who might have still lingered. When the water was released, it ran around the citadel of Mohenjo-daro and its north-western portions which indicates that probably the water came from the upper or northern reaches of the river.

Piggott has tried to create a semblance of stratification out of the mass of data given by Mackay. He has shown that there are three layers of flood-deposits: The earliest flood was between Early Period II-III & I. The second deposit of flood-silt was found above the Intermediate III Phase. The period between these two floods and the third flood which is recorded after Late III phase is shorter than that between the IInd and IIIrd which is also the last. From this distribution of the occupation deposit it seems that Mohenjo-daro was free from menace of floods for the longer time of its existence and that these floods were probably not an annual or a very frequent event. Probably after the second flood some arrangements, like building of dykes to control the river, etc. were undertaken in order to keep the city free from disastrous inundations. If certain amount of veracity is granted, these three floods may indicate that the dam on account of certain weaknesses in the material or technology or unforeseen increase in the volume of flood water, as happened in 14th c. A.D. and again in 19th c. A.D., broke twice and was rebuilt third time, when it assumed the stature of a mountain and is described by the Ṛgvedic poets as such. Moreover this time it proved to be a more successful enterprise as is proved by the thicker occupational deposit.

The dam-lake theory first propounded by M.R. Sahni in 1956

which now finds ardent supporters in Dales and Raikes is discussed below. However, before taking it up, the evidence of flood at other Indus sites is examined here as the dam-lake theory embraces the whole lower Indus.

The northernmost site in the Harappan civilization which shows signs of flooding is the site of Kot Diji about 25 miles east of Mohenjo-daro and on the left bank of the Indus. 'There are indications at various points that the early settlement was subject to floods and that stones were piled up as a protection against their action.' The causes of the destruction of the settlement are not quite clear. The traces of flood as observed by the excavator lie in the Kot Dijian cultural strata, probably because not very extensive digging has taken place outside the citadel, through the Harappan levels.[110]

Chanhu-daro is another Harappan site where excavations have revealed the traces of extensive flood. Mackay has reported thus about the Harappa III occupation in the cutting: 'From the state of the buildings of this Harappa III occupation, it is apparent that they had been left derelict and were never reoccupied; a flood had undermined them and left many walls ready to fall. Indeed we had to remove the upper portions of several before their foundations could be properly examined. This flood was quite as destructive as the one which at a later date brought the Harappa I occupation also to an end. We have, indeed, definite proof that two, if not three, floods wrought havoc in the ancient city.'[111] The various levels in the cutting are described from top to bottom as:

G. Surface layer of rubbish, pottery and pulverised brick
F. Thick layer of water-deposited silt mixed with a little rubbish, 5'5" in thickness
E. Debris of all kinds mixed with a great deal of broken brick
D. Layer of thick silt deposited by a flood
C. Stratum of debris
B. Remarkably level stratum
A. A thick layer of water logged rubbish

In this area, at least three floods can be observed. The excavator did not try to establish any correlations with the Mohenjo-daro floods because he attributed them to the bursting of river banks which might have been a local event. But, as can be observed, the upper two floods occur in more or less the same type of sequence as at Mohenjo-daro.

On mound II at Chanhu-daro, in Harappa II layer, the mud-brick platforms are noticed which might have been extended all over the site. These were found at Mohenjo-daro too. The very fact that so much

energy and economic expenditure necessary to build these platforms was thought to have been properly utilized speaks of the importance attached to them from the point of view of safety. In Harappa II period also the settlement was flooded.

Mound I at Chanhu-daro was occupied to the last by the Harappans. 'These people probably lingered here until they gradually died out or left, family by family, to join more prosperous communities elsewhere. It is not impossible that the flooding of the country by the Indus was so extensive, so frequent, and so prolonged each time that the later inhabitants of Chanhu-daro were forced to make their way to lands of higher elevation, where they lived until their identity was lost and they became merged with people of a lower status of civilization.'[112]

Mackay also thinks, though hesitantly, that the third flood was 'perhaps the great flood that led to the desertion of Mohenjo-daro'. However, Dales on the basis of his recent investigations of silt deposits at other sites near Mohenjo-daro, such as Jhukar and Lohumjo-daro thinks that deposits suggest the same flooding regime.[113]

No flood deposits are recorded at Lohumjo-daro, which is not yet properly investigated except the trial trenches dug by Majumdar in 1930-31. However, it would be worth looking for any traces of flood-deposits. Amri is yet another Harappan site which lies within a mile of the river Indus, on the right bank, on the alluvial plain but above the flood line.

Thus whatever evidence of floods is available at this stage, it roughly corroborates the findings at Mohenjo-daro and the distribution of the flooded areas seems to be confined to the lower Indus.

The dam-lake theory

The theories put forth by G.F. Dales, and R.L. Raikes are different, but their conclusions are similar. G.F. Dales, an archaeologist, first put forth his theory as 'a sudden rise in the Arabian Sea coastline of West Pakistan apparently took place sometime around the middle of the second millennium B.C. This resulted in a disastrous increase in the clearly serious floods in the major river valleys with the subsequent rise of the underground water table contributing to an increase in the soil salinity to the point where it was impossible to sustain the population of the vast urban settlements.'[114] A later stage when an archaeological survey, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania Museum along the Arabian seacoast of West Pakistan, discovered that what had served as seaports in the mature Harappan days were located 30 miles inland. The existence of these ports showed that the sea had receded during the last

4000 years with the initial rise occurring in the Harappan period. Around this time Raikes, a hydrologist, was surveying southern Baluchistan and the lower Indus valley and he thought of investigating the possibility that 'ancient topographic changes in the area might well be related to the decline of Harappan civilization'.

In 1964, a fresh excavation with the objective of determining the causes of decline of Harappan civilization was undertaken. The formation of silt deposits at various levels and at various points had already puzzled geologists like Sahni who wrote an article on it in 1956.

The theory, as stated by Raikes, is that the end of that part of the Indus civilization of which Mohenjo-daro was the capital, could have been brought about or accelerated by natural causes. It is mainly based on the 'indisputable evidence of coastal uplift' existing along the Makran coast. 'This uplift may have occurred long before the Chalcolithic period, during it, or ever since it. The author believes that the geographical evidence, read in the context of archaeological evidence, points to the coastal and other changes having occurred during Chalcolithic times: and that these changes were at least a main contributory cause of the end of the Indus civilization in Sind and of the Chalcolithic cultures in the Baluchistan hills.'[115] These changes and the uplift caused by them may have acted as a dam making the waters of the Indus spread into a lake which flooded the Indus cities upto Mohenjo-daro and Kot Diji. The region where these changes might have occurred seems to have been the area around Sehwan.

The changes propounded by Raikes are: That 'uplift or a series of uplifts of the Indus valley near Sehwan created a highly permeable barrier, the effect of which was to retain all the solids transported by the river while allowing the escape of most of its water. Mohenjo-daro and inevitably all other sites in the same general area of the Indus flood-plain, were gradually engulfed by mud. During each year's flood there would have been some free water standing above the mud level... During this phase the inhabitants succeeded in keeping their city above the water and mud by successive reconstructions including the use of massive mud-brick platforms. Some parts of the city may have been abandoned towards the end of this phase. At this stage too, shortage of timber as fuel for brick-making began to make itself felt...'

The possibility of changes of level as contributory factor to the end of some of the Indus cities was first propounded by M.R. Sahni[116] in 1956 on the analogy of an occurrence in 1819 near Hyderabad, Sindh, of a sudden local uplift of part of the flood plain of the Indus causing floods over 2000 square miles for about two years, as a result of earthquake. He referred also to the evidence in the Indus delta of both uplift

and settlement and thought that major tectonic movements may have partially accounted for the end of some of the Harappan sites. Unlike Raikes, the causes of flooding of Mohenjo-daro are attributed by Sahni to the bursting of temporary natural dams in the Indus headwaters. It may be noted that this conjecture of Sahni comes very near to the literary evidence with the difference that literary sources are explicit about the artificial dams which are described as *kṛtrimāni rodhāṁsi* (ṚV II.15.8) and that Sahni thinks that they were natural and produced by the tectonic upheavals.

Raikes has developed the hypothesis of Sahni further supporting his argument by archaeological and geological evidence: The discovery of the coastal posts at Sotka-Koh, Sutkagen-dor and Bala Kot as Harappan sites suggested the idea of a chain of coastal sites westward from Karachi. Second, that no Harappan sites are recorded in the southern part of the Indus valley flood plain to the mouth of Indus i.e. roughly that part from Amri and Chanhu-daro to the mouth. Likewise, no Harappan sites are recorded in the Las Bela plain from near the little town of Bela to the sea. Thirdly, the examination of the aerial photographs of the Makran coast shows raised prehistoric beaches at various points running approximately parallel with the present beach line. 'The prehistoric beach lines are evidence that at some period in the past the level of the sea was higher in relation to the land...' This implies an upward movement of the sea which may have taken place hundreds of thousands of years ago. All these point to the changes in the coastline due to changes of level along the coast and in the lower Indus valley.

Geological evidence is based mainly on the work of geologists like Asrar Ullah, M.I. Siddhiqu, Sahni, Harrison, Pendse and others who have observed the origin of at least some of the prehistoric beaches as the result of recent coastal uplift. Some evidence of the same type is also found at the site of Nindowari having Harappan affinities. Besides these, he thinks that the Baluchistan peasant cultures probably 'came to a fairly sudden end due to the same causes that destroyed Mohenjo-daro' and that a fairly early date, perhaps even as early as 2300 B.C. should be considered for this period of tectonic activity. The evidence of the destruction of settlements by fire which are taken to be the indications of the presence of barbarians in that region may also be the result of an earthquake. Raikes has no doubt gone to great pains to prove his hypothesis. However, there are certain handicaps in thisp roposition: His observations about the absence of the Harappan sites north of the delta region are correct and his hypothesis about the coastal line is also plausible but the reasons as explained below might be other than tectonic changes. The tectonic theory presupposes changes over a wide territory for which the evidence at present is too meagre. To say that the earthquake also might have caused the fires does not seem to be convinc-

ing. He himself has admitted[117] that the geologists place the upward movement of the Makran coast hundreds of thousands of years ago and not in the more recent thousands of years. One wonders if the geologists, who have presumed these prehistoric beaches to have been the result of coastal uplift, have considered the possibility of these beaches being artificially raised in the prehistoric times. There is yet another possibility. Most of these uplifts are in the areas where river joins the sea. In that case the uplift may be attributed to the river deposits. Probably there were gabrbands somewhere in the upper regions of the rivers which controlled the flow of alluvial soil down to the mouth of river and when due to some causes, these were broken or stopped functioning the alluvial deposits and the rubble came from the mountain during the torrential rains and raised the level of the beaches. It would be worth examining the soil at the beaches from this point of view. If these beaches are rock formations, then of course the hypothesis put forth here will not stand. In the articles of Raikes the formation is not described in detail anywhere. For understanding the second point in Raikes' argument viz. reasons for the absence of Harappan sites north of the delta region and the formation of the coast line may be considered the literary tradition, though of later origin. This may be related to the traditional location of Pātāla which in later mythology means the underworld or the abode of demons, asuras, rakṣas etc. During Alexander's invasion, the region south of Bahāmanābād (or Bahāmanābād itself ?) was known as Pātāla. It is possible, from the descriptions given by Alexander's historians to say that the sea was not very far from Pātāla, that is about 15 miles and if the coast line has been as shown by Lambrick,[118] then it is likely that the sea-shore in the delta region of the Indus has been constantly receding, the reasons for which are not far to seek. It is likely that during the Harappan times the coast line was even further to the north of Pātāla which will incidentally explain the findings of J.-M. Casal about the abundance of marine snails in the region of Amri[119] which is not far from Bahāmanābād. Later tradition of Mahābhārata and Harivaṁśa consistently relates Pātāla with non-Aryans. Kālakañja or Kālakeya Asuras are said to have had a city in Pātāla called Hiraṇyapura. It is also said to be the home of Pañcajana, the daitya of Pātāla, the name Pañcajana as well as his non-Aryan identity being significant. Curiously enough Pātāla is not mentioned in Ṛgveda nor in the Brāhmaṇas, from which it may be conjectured that probably the Aryans did not know this region very intimately in the early stages. However, the association of the demons suggests that after the defeat in the northern Indus valley, probably the Asuras came to the south-western region in the Hab valley and in Baluchistan. M.R. Haig writing on 'The Indus Delta country, a memoir chiefly on its ancient geography and history'[120] identifies Pātāla with Potālā or Potālaka, the name of Dalai Lama's Lhasa residence. The identification is based on a Tibetan tradition cited by Csoma de Köros: 'Potālā or Potālaka (Tib. *gru*

ḥdzin or *ḥul. go. kru. dzin*, boat receiver, a haven or port) is the name of an ancient city at the mouth of the Indus river, the residence of Ixwaku and his descendants of Sūryavaṁśa.'[121] Haig thinks that Potālā is the same as Pātāla, 35 miles south-east of present Hyderabad and not identical with the latter. This identifies it as 'an ancient city at the mouth of Indus river'. It is also interesting that at one time i.e. when this tradition came into vogue, it was situated at the mouth of the Indus. The word Potālā is also available in Sanskrit with identical meaning.

Further the absence of the Harappan sites in the region from Amri to the mouth of the Indus may confirm the hypothesis that the land in this region has come into existence at a later date. In fact, Pātāla might prove to be a landmark, if the tradition could be verified archaeologically. This point may be joined with the Mango Pir Harappan site north of Karachi. Going along the coast, Bala Kot is known as a Harappan site and can be linked with the coastal posts of Sotka Koh and Sutkagendor which might have been at that time on the sea-coast or a little inside.

The problem of flood-silt still remains untackled. If the tectonic changes in the prehistoric times have caused the silting of the Harappan cities, of nearly 30 feet in thickness, how is it that the occurrence of 1819 near Hyderabad has not left any traces of silt? At least they are not mentioned by Raikes. Supposing such movements were common in the prehistoric times, first, the area would have been unsuitable for permanent settlement. Secondly, if a movement of more intensity than that of 1819 is presupposed, the floods should have been on a wider scale than 2000 miles and for a time longer than two years. But this does not seem to be the case. As the Indus settlements indicate the area from Mohenjo-daro to Hyderabad was considered fit by the Indus folk for permanent settlement. This does not imply that the Indus folk were completely unaware of the disasters of the natural floods. The fact that in most of the area from Kot Diji downwards, mud-brick platforms for houses were thought to be necessary, means that the citizens were acutely aware of the floods but still they considered the area habitable. As has been seen above, the city of Mohenjo-daro was practically free from the floods for the longer time of its existence between the Inter II and Late III in the excavated remains until the Late phase. Further, the flood deposits of sandy clay are thicker in the Early and Intermediate period whereas it is thinner in the later period as shown in the diagram of Piggott[122] which might signify that according to the tectonic change theory the last flood might have been of a milder nature than the earlier two. The silty-clay or sandy clay deposited by the floods can also supply an important clue as to the centre of the tectonic changes. Probably a study of the pattern of deposition of silt may reveal certain tendencies to increase towards the circumference of the lake created by the uplift, which might be of use in determining the direction of the water current.

Thus if the tectonic theory represents the course of events in prehistoric times, the behaviour of the deposit around Mohenjo-daro and Kot Diji and that at Chanhu-daro may be examined. It may be mentioned that Amri which is above the flood-plains should also have felt the impact of the uplift. But no traces of flood are recorded at Amri. The tenacity and energy needed to rebuild the city twice from the worse kind of disasters seems to have suddenly failed. After the third flood the city was partially rebuilt. There were signs of decay and degeneration and, lastly, failure of the civic authority which was not noticed after the first two floods. In these circumstances it seems appropriate that the causes of the floods in the Late Period and the simultaneous failure of the civic authority should be traced to a third agency.

As has been shown above, Ṛgveda speaks of a dam broken by Indra after killing Vṛtra. Now the archaeological and hydrological findings of Dales and Raikes support one time existence of the dam on the joint stream of the five rivers, the location being to the north of Kot Diji and probably somewhere around Sakkar, a convenient site for this purpose. As has been already mentioned, Sahni also thought that the floods in the lower Indus valley might have been caused by the breaking up of the dams in the upper region.

Dales in his excavations of 1964-65 mainly concentrated on the problem of the decline and disappearance of Harappan civilization. The 1964 test borings revealed the thickness of the archaeological strata 39′ below the ground level. Besides these borings helped to create a picture of the silt deposits below the ground level. 'When the layers above ground are added to those below, the silts sandwiched between the city's successive occupation levels span a vertical distance of seventy feet.'[123] These thick deposits and the problem of those flood-deposits preserved in the ruins of Mohenjo-daro at points as high as 30 feet above ground level intrigued Raikes and Dales. Out of this was born the dam-and-lake theory.

Now Dales himself has stated that 'both at Mohenjo-daro at smaller sites between the city and Sehwan the silt deposits are of the kind characteristic of still-water conditions in a lake rather than the kind deposited by the fast-moving waters of a flooded river'. The important point here is the kind of silt deposited by these floods. Such a deposit may gather also behind a dam when it breached and the torrent of river started flowing. This still-water silt or rather semi-still-water silt gradually deposited itself on the banks. Dales has made an effort to fit this dam-lake theory with the archaeological data. He attributes the building of massive mud-brick platforms faced with fired bricks to the attempt to raise the level of the city. As has been seen above, these platforms are a common feature both at Mohenjo-daro and Chanhu-daro.

Even in that latest level which is called by Dales as the Squatter Level, he has noted the architectural feature in which the abandoned rooms and alleyways of the previous occupation were completely filled in with rubble and grey dirt and crudely made packing walls were constructed to face portions of these.[121] Such platforms are found not only in the Indus valley but they have been a feature which the Indus valley houses shared with those of Babylonia.[125] The only difference between the platforms of the two countries was that in early Babylonia, river clay rather than ordinary earth was used. In the Indus valley, the filling sometimes appears to have been poured in wet but mostly the unbaked bricks were used. In early Sumer, just lumps of clay from the river were thrown. Thus the platforms may rather indicate that to the ancient riverine civilizations flood was always a great threat but it was treated as a necessary evil and the people of these areas were prepared for it at all times. Thus probably the lower unexcavated levels of Mohenjo-daro may reveal the awareness of this danger even at that early stage. The river water was essential for agriculture, for trade, transport, in fact for the very survival and probably the danger of the natural and/or artificial floods could be grappled with, with the help of these platforms which, paradoxically enough, needed less energy, labour and expenditure. Thus they need not signify any special flood water coming from the lower Indus on account of the uplift from tectonic changes but they may have been more than essential for a people living close to the river and for whom the closeness to the river was as important as their life.

The repeated floods and the thick deposits of clear silt or silt clay brought along with them might have two-fold origin: The silt which was accumulated in the dam water itself and the material of which the dam was made. The sudden release of water on a large scale might result in floods over the lower Indus and if the sluice valves of the dam had been left open, then the water coming from above might also take some of the silt settled at the bottom and deposit it over the lower banks. Besides this, if the dam was broken either because of the violence or through sheer disuse, then the flood water might carry the lighter material like clay and spread it along its course. It appears that the dams of the Early and Intermediate levels at Mohenjo-daro were probably made of clay taken from the banks of the river itself. This clay is represented by the thick deposits of clear silt and stiff clay at Chanhu-daro and Mohenjo-daro. After these two disasters a dam probably of stone and/or burnt brick was built which seemed to have endured much longer than its clay counterparts in the earlier period. For this we find evidence in Raikes' researches where he found occurrences of silty clay deposits of deep sterile material showing evidence of deposition under water. Others were composed of 'deep deposits of brick rubble totally impregnated by the same silty clay, *probably the result of the collapse of structures*'.[126] This would incidentally explain the thinner deposit

brought by the latest flood at both the places. The technology and the know-how for building the dam of the dimensions which could flood the city of Mohenjo-daro almost upto the level of 30 feet above ground level was available to the Indus architects and engineers. The phenomenon of the silt deposits preserved at the height of 30 feet above ground level may only reflect the capacity of the dam and the great volume of water which could be stored. This may be illustrated by an event which took place in Poona in the year A.D. 1962. A clay dam built a few miles away from Poona near a village called Panshet on Mulā river developed cracks, on account of the volume of water which was allowed to gather. Ultimately, the dam broke down inundating the villages on both the banks of the river and Poona city through which the river flows. Several bridges join the two halves of the city on the banks of the river. Normal natural floods do not rise above a certain level which is well beneath the arches of the bridges. But in the flood of 1962 the waters not only flew over the bridges but inundated the electric-supply posts and probably two stories of buildings in the locality, almost equal to 60 feet or more. The water brought with it the red, sticky clay. This was the building material of the dam. Compared to Indus, Mulā is a rivulet. If that rivulet could cause so much damage and could assume these terrifying dimensions, the deposit at 30 feet above ground is probably not to be wondered at.

The fact that even during the Squatter Level (of Dales) the Indus folk continued to construct their, now impoverished, houses on platforms created out of earlier constructions, suggests that the danger of flood was not over, which probably may be corroborated on the authority of Ṛgveda where Indra is said to have released the waters for days and autumns i.e. the years. The people felt insecure till the end. "Architecturally it is important to note that before the building of this latest squatter level the abandoned rooms and alleyways of the previous occupation were completely filled in with rubble and grey dirt. Also, crudely made packing walls were constructed to face portions of these fillings. When such fillings were removed during our excavation, it was found that these structures so filled in were still in fairly good condition and should have been adequate for habitation. Why then did the last occupant of the city go to the trouble of packing these areas with from three to four feet of fill? If the overall picture we are obtaining from our other studies is correct, it becomes obvious why this elaborate filling and platform making was undertaken. It was the last of several attempts on the part of the Mohenjo-daro population to artificially raise the level of the city to keep above the height of the flood waters." These are the observations of Dales.

The hypothesis of the dam proposed above may be further corroborated by the existence of two spill channels on the two sides of the

Indus viz. the eastern Nārā and the western Nārā. Nārā in Sumerian means water. These two channels which are called after the element may suggest that they served the function of collecting the excess water from the dam which was further diverted to irrigation purposes. The word *nālā* which is now used for the current into which the drains of the townships are emptied has become synonymous with *gandhā-nālā* i.e. the drain water. However, originally it was *nārā* which was water and the existence of the two channels on the sides of the Indus suggests this function for them.

The merit of the Ṛgvedic description of a mountain which was erected across the bed of the Sindhu and was obstructing the waters is that it does not propound any changes over a wide area. In fact it simplifies and clarifies the issues considerably. The direct proof of the veracity of the Ṛgvedic description lies in the points viz. the discovery of the silty clay of still water origin, the occurrence of the floods in the lower Indus valley south of Kot Diji, and the function of the two Nārās.

It has been very often said that towards the end, the Indus civilization was on the decline. The first two floods in the history of Indus civilization were obviously of short duration. The civic authority was not in any way paralysed by floods. This is reflected in the orderly manner in which the cities, towns and villages returned to normal life producing items indicative of the full vitality and maturity of the culture and civilization. Whereas after the third flood in the Late Phase, the civic authority received a severe blow and probably could not survive it as is reflected in the kilns in the centre of roads, blocking of alleys etc. Thus if the Ṛgvedic evidence is given credence, the death of Vṛtra was really the greatest blow to the empire of the Asuras. The control of the dam proved to be the crucial point and having obtained control, Indra succeeded in destroying the great civilization. Moreover, the menace of Indra did not leave them alone even after the destruction of the towns. Even in the Late Period excavated by Dales, suggestions of rooms being abandoned have been discovered. Cooking pots were found on the floor of one room, while another room was severely burnt. This may imply that even after the floods, Harappans returned to their houses from where they were driven out again and again.

7. The cities of the Indus valley

As has been seen above the *puras* or enclosed cities of the Ṛgveda are associated with the Asuras and the Dāśas and Indra has been credited with the destruction of these cities. In fact, the titles Puramdara, the breaker of citadel and Pūrbhid were conferred on him for this feat.

The character of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa as cities is a long

established fact which is based on several characteristic features noted by archaeologists in the Indus valley and elsewhere especially in ancient Mesopotamia. First amongst these may be counted the density of population which is reflected in the extent of the ruins of both cities which are, at the present stage of our knowledge, spread over $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. In the legends recorded by some of the earlier travellers like Masson, Burnes and others, the ancient cities, especially Harappa which was said to be 12 *kos* in area (i.e. about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles), were very extensive. It would be of interest to test this tradition archaeologically. The second feature to be reflected in the ruins might be the acquaintance with the concept of town-planning and administratively, with the idea of the basic services like drainage system, garbage collection reflecting the beginning of the concept of public health, roads and enforcing certain rules for civic life, certain control over the production of items of everyday use like pottery, weapons, different kinds of cloth, mats, and so on. The third feature consists of the monumental buildings like the granary, bath and the citadel itself, which distinguish the city from the village. The fact that no conspicuous building of the nature of a temple is definitely identified *on the* citadel, may probably speak of the secular nature of the central authority which governed the widespread empire from the citadel. The separation between the religious and the political authority thus becomes clear. The fourth feature may be a recording system with two important ingredients which are writing and an exact system of weights and measures. The nature of records themselves might be indicative of a system of collection of surplus of all produces, in some form or other and also of a system of redistribution of this surplus. Writing by itself, used to whatever purpose, is recognised as an important advance in civilization. Many seals bearing a symbol and a short legend written in pictographs have been discovered at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Chanhu-daro, Kalibangan and Lothal. The discovery of seals at a limited number of places clearly demarcates these sites as administrative centres of the empire, which in turn may imply that the writing was probably not yet used for general or literary purposes. It was mainly a part of the administrative and trade machinery, though this conclusion is dependent on the discovery of seals and may have to be qualified or revised if further excavations change the position substantially by the discovery of lengthy writings. The fifth important feature is the foreign trade. The sixth ingredient of urbanization may be found in the artefacts excavated at the sites indicating the knowledge of metallurgy and the specialists who wielded it to produce things needed for everyday use as well as for purposes of war. To this may be added as the seventh feature consisting of the creation of a structure, social, economic and political which served not only to build up an agricultural hinterland but as a stabilising force. The last and probably the most important factor as the basis of the development of an area into a city is the agricultural surplus, which is as has already been seen is reflected in the existence of granaries at

Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and Lothal, for supporting the non-agricultural population like full-time skilled workers, army, bureaucracy, etc. That such a section of population existed is borne out by the existence of artefacts which could be produced only by specialists devoting all their working time to their profession.

The important problem posed by the archaeologists in this context is of the beginning of urbanization in the Indian sub-continent. Before discussing it, a few details available in the literary sources about the fortresses may be noted here. As noted already in Chapter III.3, the ṚV attributes the fortresses to the Asuras and the Dāsas. It is not possible to create a picture to tally with what is available through archaeology of the advanced state of civilization. Because the Aryans did not preserve the details of the life of the Asuras or their advanced civilization. The term *māyā* which characterises every Asura from God to the individuals refers to his most predominant ability and that is the ability to create, to build. This might be taken to be the overall impression of the Asura civilization on the Aryan mind. However, it is possible to cull out a few more details about the scene in the Indus valley as seen by the Aryans. The density of the population might be gauged by the number of fortresses destroyed by the Indra—usually ninety-nine or hundred fortresses belonging to an Asura are said to have been destroyed by Indra when he killed him. Such a statement, if it is treated as factual, might imply that every fortress had under its administrative control hundred settlements of smaller sizes. It may be interesting to test the validity of this possibility which will also give some idea of the urban geography of the Indus civilization and may also throw light on its extent, organisation pattern and so on.

As has been shown above, the raw materials out of which the buildings were constructed and which is probably the only detail available in the ṚV may be corroborated on the basis of archaeological findings. Although use of stone is rare in Mohenjo-daro and Harappa except for decorative purposes, the use of mud brick which is described in the ṚV as *āmāsu pūrṣu*, in the walls of the raw (bricks or earth) is common on the Harappan sites both in monumental structures and smaller houses. They were used mainly to give width to the walls between the revetments, both outer sides being covered with baked brick as also in alternate courses in the wall. The use of baked brick itself is testified by the ṚV in its description of *śāradīs śarma* i.e. a refuge, a shelter of baked (brick) ones.

The third raw material for houses seems to have been reeds which grow plentifully around the Dhands or lakes in Sindh and might have been used by the poor people and also in better houses as part of roofing material. Mackay has described the technique thus: 'The method of laying

straw or reed-matting upon the beams and then covering it with mud to form a roof or the floor of an upper storey was practically universal in the ancient east as now; other fragments of plaster bearing impressions of reed-matting were found in the western court of Bl. 1 where they appear to have been cleared out of room 32 of the south-west wing, which had obviously been burnt out by a conflagration.' Although it is not mentioned in the literary sources, wood was one of the major items frequently used in the construction of the Harappan houses. The use of wood is discussed in the context of use of fire by the devas to kill asuras and others.

The beginning of urbanization in the Indian subcontinent is an important problem mainly in the context of archaeological findings. The literary sources do not help us much to throw light on it.

Several attempts have been made to lay down the pre-conditions of city life by sociologists, anthropologists as well as archaeologists.[127] From the sociologist's point of view 'the prerequisites for the emergence of cities are: 1. a favourable ecological base, 2. an advanced technology in both the agricultural and non-agricultural spheres, and 3. a complex social organization—above all a well-developed power structure.'[128] The anthropologists attribute the great change in man's way of life called the urban revolution to the creation of an intricate pattern of institutions. "In contrast [to the agricultural revolution] the urban revolution was a decisive cultural and social change that was less directly linked to changes in the exploitation of environment. To be sure, it rested ultimately on food surpluses obtained by agricultural producers above their own requirements and somehow made available to city dwellers engaged in other activities. But its essential element was a whole series of new institutions and the vastly greater size and complexity of the social unit, rather than basic innovations in subsistence. In short, the different forms that early urban societies assumed are essentially the products of differently interacting political and economic-human-forces. And the interpretative skills rooted more in the social sciences than in the natural sciences."[129] Archaeologist's point of view is clearly enunciated by V. Gordon Childe in his ten-point formula,[130] based on the interpretation of field data.

Thus it seems that when we look for the beginnings of urbanization in the Indian subcontinent, it is necessary to look for the state of technology in agricultural and non-agricultural spheres, the social organization and the means and ways set up by man to exploit his natural surroundings for a better way of life in the pre-Harappan layers which are discovered at least at four sites and in well-stratified context. The four sites are Kot Diji, Harappa, Kalibangan and Amri. The first of these four sites viz. Kot Diji is about 20 miles from the river Indus on its

eastern bank and 25 miles east of Mohenjo-daro. Excavation revealed, altogether, sixteen layers of occupation, of which the latest three yielded artefacts typical of mature Harappan civilization. In layer 3A appeared an abrupt change in the material culture introducing for the first time the Harappan elements which continue in the three upper strata. Below 3A upto layer 16 is found a different ceramic industry which goes down to the beginning of occupation on bed-rock. Associated with this pottery are the remains of a pre-Harappan fortified citadel. The town beyond the limits of the fortified area has not been examined. Thus the definite extent of the pre-Harappan town is not known. The occupational deposits are thick indicative of a well-settled and prosperous community.

The fortification wall of the citadel was massive, the lower courses of which were of limestone rubble and the upper, mud-brick. Its external face was revetted with mud and mud-brick. The wall was strengthened by bastions and preserved in places to height of 12-14 feet. The town showed five main occupations indicating, according to the excavator, F.A. Khan, shorter or less intensive period of occupation than what the citadel shows in 13 layers of accumulated mud-brick building debris containing some 11-12 occupation levels. Within the citadel in the upper ten feet, house walls of stone and mud-brick occur. The pottery of the Kot Dijians of the pre-Harappan layers is described as 'fine thin body, short headed or slightly everted rim, fugitive broad band round the neck in red, brown, sepia or warm black, varying from one to three inches in width, painted on a cream or dull red slip', 'wheel-made' with 'well-levigated clay and the ground varies from pinkish to red colour'. The decoration consists mainly of horizontal and wavy lines, single loops, roundels and simple triangular patterns, drawn in a careful, precise and delicate band in contrast with the highly stylized, bold, carefree style of the Harappans. The scale pattern of Harappans is the only common motif with the Kot Diji paintings. 'The material culture included a chert-blade industry with some serrated blades and other blades reportedly bearing 'sickle gloss'. A small number of arrow-heads, unfortunately not illustrated, suggest parallels with Periano Ghundai I and Mundigak II-V. Stone querns, pestles, balls...and at least one fine terracotta bull were found. Except a piece of a bronze bangle, no copper objects are reported.'[131]

The second site where the existence of a pre-Harappan settlement has been detected is Harappa itself. A non-Harappan type of pottery was found between the base of the citadel and the natural soil and also found embedded in the material from which the lower part of the Harappan defences were constructed.[132] 'As a whole, this pre-Harappan ware is finer than the Harappan; its slip is mostly of dark purple-red with a notably dull matt surface. Decoration, particularly at the rim, commonly consists of carefully ruled horizontal black bands rarely with rows of

pendant loops. The design of concentric semi-circle found at Harappa is also reported from Periano Ghundai.'[133]

The second motif paralleled at other sites is the rows of pendant loops which is found at Moghul Ghundai and pre-Harappan levels of Kalibangan.[134] The third site is Kalibangan where beneath the Harappan citadel are found the remains of an earlier fortified area with a ceramic completely different from that of Harappa. It is wheel-made, light and thin in fabric, pinkish to red in colour and painted in black combined sometimes with white hatching. The decoration is mostly confined to neck and shoulder and is essentially geometric: horizontal bands as thick as the height of the neck, loops or meanders as fringes or enclosed by horizontal bands, cross-hatched or latticed triangles, panels of opposed triangles separated by panels of vertical wavy lines, and converging groups of diagonal lines. The most important discovery in these pre-Harappan levels of Kalibangan is that of the ploughed field, discussed above. Side by side with this may also be noted the discovery of baked bricks and drainage or at least a sort of a concept of drainage.[135]

The fourth site where pre-Harappan layers were found is Amri, 100 miles south of Mohenjo-daro, a mile from the river Indus, on the right bank. The sequence found here is indicative of the evolution of the culture of the people. It is divided into two periods. In the A Phase of Period I which is divided into four phases, no structures were discovered but it yielded a number of ditches, buried storage jars and other pottery. Most of the pottery was handmade, with monochrome designs and some with bichrome, 'including motifs recalling the Togau C ware and may be thus contemporary with Anjira III-IV'. Fragments of copper and bronze, a chert-blade industry and number of stone balls are also reported. The second phase follows without break and consists of two building phases of mud bricks with irregular sizes and in some instances on stone base. The pottery painting motifs have a wider range than before. The chert-blades and bone tools continue to be in use. The third phase witnesses further development, and may probably be called the highest watermark in the development of the Amri culture as the next phase is short-lived and from Period II a cultural break follows ushering in a new type of pottery viz. Harappan along with the Amrian. In the third phase of Period I both mud-bricks and stones are used in the construction of houses. An additional feature is a square structure possibly meant as a platform to raise the house level. It has no lateral entrance and is about a yard square. The pottery in this phase is mostly wheel thrown and is painted with a wide variety of motifs mainly geometric in monochrome and polychrome styles. The typology develops directly from early phases. Other items of material culture continue without much change. Final and fourth phase of Period I is short-lived

with only one building level and continuation of all the other features of the culture, except two painted sherds marking a slight departure. One is painted with a humped Indian bull and the other has a row of quadrupeds, two of which appear to be caprids and one a carnivore. The earliest phases IA-B find parallels with Anjira III, Kili Ghul Mohammad III-IV, Mundigak III and also may have links with Chicha Dherai, Shahidan (north of Kurram garhi on the left bank of Kurram river) and Periano Ghundai in pre-Harappan phases.[136] Amri pottery designs have also something in common with that of the pre-Harappan Kalibangan, for example, the design of concentric semi-circles in Amri IC and also the cross-hatching inside the geometric pattern. A number of other sites belonging to the Amrian culture are Lohri on the lake Manchhar, Pandi Wahi, Bandhni, Damb Buthi, Chauro etc.

The possible conclusions drawn from the above data are as follows: First, the pre-Harappan communities were spread over a comparatively large area i.e. between Harappa in west Punjab to parts of Baluchistan and Afghanistan to the east of Kurram river and Amri to the south. Secondly, they were a settled population who could derive their food supply from agriculture as traces of it are found at Kalibangan. This is further supported by the use of wheel-made pottery, the acquaintance and probably the domestication of the Indian bull as the draft animal. Thirdly, the state of technology although not advanced to the stage of using metals was not altogether primitive as the use of potter's wheel marks an important technological change. The discovery might be of local origin as is suggested by the sequence at Amri. The acqaintance with metal is not unknown but its use for different purposes is not testified. Fourth, the monumental buildings like the citadels were in vogue which implies a certain social organization, in which a power structure was evolving. Certain amount of agricultural and other surplus might also be derived from the existence of the citadel which implies a group of members who lived on the surplus produced by the farmers and others. Fifth, the division of labour was also taking place since pottery, stone implements and possibly fishing and mat-making might have been other full-time professions. Sixth, although certain contact between the wide-spread settlements can be envisaged, the contacts of the nature of trade seem to have been lacking, which might have hampered their further development towards urbanization. Also this might in turn be an index of the quantity of produce which might have been just sufficient for the settlement itself and may in short mean that the economy had no surplus. Seven, the people to whom these settlements belonged had not yet learnt to represent their language in a script. This might again corroborate lack of surplus and trade because writing is supposed to have been invented or adopted from the already existing picture scripts for keeping records of trade and other economic activity. Eighth, the artefacts absent in the list are those which could be classified as cult-objects having religious

connotation, like, for example the female figurines of the Harappan period.

E.E. Lampard in his essay on 'Historical aspects of urbanization' has divided the history of urbanization in two phases: 'Primordial urbanization: the first achievement of incipient urban organization as an additional and more productive mode of collective adaptation to physical and social environment. Secondly, Definitive urbanization: The culmination of primordial tendencies in the additional and alternative form of social organization: the definitive city. By means of its capacity to generate, store and utilize social saving, the definitive city artefact is capable of transplanting itself from out of its native uterine environments.'[137]

He sums up various approaches thus: In the social sciences, three conceptions of urbanization are current, viz. the behavioural, the structural, and the demographic. The first conceives of urbanization as an adjustment of personal behaviour in the sense that it focuses on the conduct of individuals. Certain patterns of behaviour or thought, regardless of social environment and locale are said to be urban... The structural concept ignores the patterned behaviour of individual persons and fastens on the patterned activities of whole populations. The process of urbanization is typically said to involve the movement of people out of agricultural communities into other and generally larger non-agricultural communities. This conception gives primary recognition to the differential ordering of occupations or industries within a given territorial space... The demographic approach again focuses on space but it largely ignores individual behaviour and the structure of occupations. In its most succinct form it postulates that urbanization is a process of population concentration. Individually all the three approaches are inadequate. Therefore, he tries to restate the problem in terms of human ecology, in which 'the community structure or oikumene at any time is conceived as a balance between a population aggregate and its environment, mediated by technology and social organization'. Where contact with other peoples is involved, their presence is subsumed under environment, social as well as physical. Both technology and organization are attributes of the population. Technology may be regarded as a cultural variable and organization as a social variable, the one through which a population aggregate takes on its 'systemic' aspects.

With this definition of human ecology, he goes on to formulate his hypothesis that 'whether from indigenous forerunners or external contacts, primordial urbanization most likely emerged in areas that contained diverse but closely juxtaposed subenvironments or cultures which, through social interaction, were symbiotically exploited'.

If we look at the pre-Harappan material discussed above in the

light of this framework it may appear plausible that the pre-Harappan settlements had reached a stage of incipient urban organization. As has been seen above the agricultural revolution had already taken place in the pre-Harappan levels and besides if the observations of B.B. Lal at Kalibangan are correct, they had known the use of plough. Potter's wheel was also known. Their houses were made of mud brick and stone, and the use of baked brick was discovered. The bull was domesticated and even the domestication of horse might have taken place as horse-bones are reported from the layers which may be of pre-Harappan date at Rana Ghundai. To this may be added the beginnings of the idea of drainage of dirty water. Besides this, the material cultures discussed above also reflect a certain amount of division of labour and a collective effort on the part of the communities to evolve productive patterns of relationship. This is what is called by Lampard as Primordial Urbanization. Thus it is possible to maintain even at this stage with the meagre knowledge of pre-Harappan stratum that the pre-Harappan culture in the Indus valley which had evolved possibly around Amri had reached a stage where the settlements after the fashion of Jericho in Palestine could be called towns and not villages. This stage is the stage of primordial urbanization.

The chronology for this phase is still pretty uncertain. Many of the sites in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the north-western regions of the Indian subcontinent might reveal pre-Harappan affinities. The date of the Harappan civilization itself is not yet definitely fixed but considering the still unexposed layers of occupation about 13 feet thick, at Mohenjo-daro, it may be possible to say that the pre-Harappan is really much older than can be conceived at present.

But by no stretch of imagination is it possible to say that the Harappan culture has evolved directly from the pre-Harappan. The Harappan culture as known from various sites is a mature phenomenon which does not bear traces of evolution. It has already attained maturity and functions at that point. Technological as well as organizational development attained by Harappan civilization is far superior to that of the pre-Harappan cultures. It is an unnecessary exercise of little use to try to envisage the stages through which the pre-Harappan might have had to pass in order to attain the stage represented by the Harappan. It is also doubtful if such a laboratory-site where the evolutionary stages are clearly reflected in the artefacts can be discovered. In spite of this civilizational gap between the Harappans and pre-Harappans, it must be said that the pre-Harappans were not slow in adapting themselves to the new transformation introduced by the Harappans. In fact, a part of the credit of the maturity displayed by the Harappan civilization must go to this process of adaptation and submergence on the one hand and on the other to the appropriate use of the potential capacities in the human

resources. This incidentally further acclaims the organizational skill of those who were in an advanced stage of civilization. The fact that many of the Harappan settlements are on the sites previously occupied by the pre-Harappans might indicate a certain knowledge of the strategic positions, either for defence purposes or nearness to the source of water supply or availability of agriculturally useful land, of the sites. The fact that both the Harappans and their predecessors chose the same sites means the less civilized predecessors were not backward in this respect.

The urbanization brought in by the Harappans who were the Asuras of the Ṛgveda was what is called by Lampard as of the definitive type. 'The tendencies of primordial urbanization become definitive when relations among the partly differentiated subenvironments are *integrated* at an areal level.' In the process of becoming a part of a larger organization, an area may first experience destabilization which lifts the people from their town or village bounds making them conscious of the larger comity. Contacts with people of other areas through exchange of goods, ideas, persons, etc. reinforce this pattern of organization. This may simply transform the village or town communities and that settlement from which this organization pattern is organized and laid down develops into a city. The stage of urbanization introduced by them (i.e. the Harappans) exactly tallies with the description of definitive urbanization offered by Lampard, wherein the quality of transferability is emphasized. The evolution of urbanization has taken place elsewhere whereas it could be reproduced or even improved upon in the new environment, both by way of natural and human resources available in the Indus valley. This in turn means that as far as the Asuras, who were the force behind the Indus culture, are concerned, urbanization had already become a way of life in very early days. The perfect planning etc. indicates that lot of thought had already gone into the various aspects, technological and organizational, of city life.

Now as can be seen, this is exactly what happened in the Indus valley at the advent of the Harappans who are here identified as the Asuras. What happened did not take place as an unconscious growth but there seems to have been an organised, conscious pattern right from the planning of the cities and towns. The cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa as also the smaller town of Kalibangan have been planned right from the beginning on the most modern lines. The execution of the plans including the carefully built drainage system and the arrangements for garbage collection was no less meticulous. The Asuras, as their name reveals, had affinities with the people of Assyria and who called themselves after their god. Although architectural planning was known in Sumer and Assyria the northern Mesopotamia from early days, town-planning and drainage system were altogether new concepts introduced by the Asuras. The speakers of Semitic and Sumerian

have been found intermingled from the earliest times. As has been already observed, their penetration to the eastern region along the Indus is associated at certain sites with a fire on the settlements after which the characteristic Harappan artefacts appear. This might imply that having destroyed the earlier social, political and material structure, the population under the Harappan rule was organized into a new pattern. This incidentally explains the existence of different ethnic types as evident from the study of skeletal remains found at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. The tradition that the five peoples who fought with the Aryas were Asuras, Rakṣas, Yakṣas, Ghandharvas and Piśācas is confirmed. They were brought together by the Asuras into a comity which created the Harappan civilization. Each community had a distinct role to play. It may be worthwhile to look into a possibility of the Dāśas being identified with the communities around Amri. The Rakṣas may be related to the pre-Harappan communities in northern Baluchistan. In fact, it would be worth investigating the correlation between that part of northern Makran called Rakhshan and the Rakṣas. It appears that the ending *an* of the place-names in that area—e.g. Makran, Jhalawan, Kharan and so on—had some special meaning. Recently in a short note Ilya Gershevitch has pointed out: 'It is characteristic of the Elamite language that place-names which in other languages end in *āf* often show instead an ending written *ān*'. The example he cites is that of Susa in Old Persian, but Śuśān in Elamite. It appears that the *an* in Rakhshan, Makran etc. is really the Elamite *ān*.[133]

After this the development of Harappan civilization depended on 'closer coordination of activities and hence the institution of more specialized control functions that can define new boundaries and heighten organization'. They created an intricate network of interrelations which was city-orientated but the basis of which was the agriculturally productive village. Another important source of enriching the complex community as a whole was trade and this too was introduced by the Harappans. The agricultural and other surplus for the trade became available to the central authority in return for certain services like defence, irrigation, etc. In this also must be included construction of roads facilitating communications between the agriculturally productive areas and the government centres. Not much archaeological work has been done in the direction of finding the possible network of roads. It is unthinkable that a vast area of ruins of the Indus civilization did not throw any hint of a network of roads. The absence of such a network would in fact defeat the purpose of having such an extensive area under a single authority. The literary sources indicate that there was an intricate central road-system which was headed by a high ranking official.

The personality of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro is distinct from the cities of Mesopotamia. Architecturally, in Mesopotamia the temple was

situated at the centre of the city whereas in both these cities the citadel is situated outside the city, to the west. Both the Harappan cities are planned on modern principles of planning with equally well-planned drainage system, arrangements for the collection of garbage, etc., reflecting the concern for public health and sanitation. No such facilities are reported from any of the Mesopotamian cities. The absence of a temple building on the citadel mound is very significant. It throws light on the nature of the political authority symbolised in the monumental agriculture and the assemblage of the actual buildings on citadel mound. This absence of the temple building on the citadel (at least in the areas excavated so far) can be attributed to the separation between the political and religious authority. It appears that this may also indicate the nature of the power which governed the empire. The political power, as will be seen later, was concentrated in the hands of an individual who was called emperor, *samrāṭ*. Further, the fact that the temple was not at the centre of the town suggests a secular personality. The religious tradition of Harappans i.e. the Asuras, does not seem to have been spatially bound. Originally the god was not conceived as a city-god but as a god of the people who called themselves after him. Such a godhead can be reinstated at any chosen place. This conception of divinity may give a certain mobility and freedom to the people without creating hindrance by conceptions about sanctity of spots. The high degree of uniformity reflected at Mohenjo-daro, Harappa and the areas outlying the main centres suggests that the entire civilized area was united under a single central authority.

The problem of incentive for the technological innovations as well as the regular production has always been posed by archaeologists and answers such as slave labour or forced labour are not infrequent. As will be seen later the government constantly provided the incentive through officers appointed for the purpose who regulated the work-hours, solved the problems of the workers, gave them facilities like raw materials, tools for work etc. which might have been the government concern at least in the case of those raw materials which were imported. Moreover, during the historical period the craftsmen and artists have always survived on the patronage of the ruler and the nobility. Besides, urbanization itself might have provided plenty of incentive for innovation which was rewarded through a system of redistribution based on the shares in the whole produce which may vary from year to year, which always ensured certain amount of income to all those who participated in the collective activity of production. Even if this might have worked in the rural areas, an urban system does not clearly emerge from the available archaeological material. However, there is a possibility of a system of annual distribution of the shares of agricultural produce. As will be seen later, the governing principle on which the empire of the Asuras was based was *ṛta*, the cosmic order and its accom-

panying concomitant on societal level, the moral order and the social justice. The public was assured of justice in normal course and there was no necessity for any kind of force or coercion to make them work.

One more point mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas in connection with the destruction of the fortresses of Asuras is that they were besieged by the devas.[139] It would be worthwhile to test the validity of this tradition archaeologically, on the outskirts of the ancient cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. If the Brāhmaṇas are recording an authentic tradition it may imply that the lower cities also had a wall encircling them just as the lower town of Kalibangan.

The gradual decline recorded at Mohenjo-daro, Chanhu-daro and other sites situated downstream is indicative of the long duration of the struggle between the devas and the asuras and not the signs of inherent decline, already set in. The decline noticed in the Late Phase II and III is really the outcome of the unnatural floods as a result of manoeuvring of the dam gates by Indra. It may be noted that the Aryans really did not stay at these sites. It would be interesting to locate the camp of the Aryans from where they operated. Thus in this respect too the literary tradition may be factual.

Probably the Ṛgvedic poets were correct in emphasizing the creative ability of the Asuras as reflected in their constructions like the citadels fortified with a system of defences, the bath, the granaries, the drainage system and the solid houses. All the asuras are called *māyins*, i.e. endowed with creative capacity whereas the creative power of the god Asura has smeared the sun himself!

The use of the Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro is still not correctly understood. But as is said in JB I.42-44 (see Chapter IV.1) the bath was used for ritual bathing especially by the Apsaras and the Gandharvas who might have represented the primordial parents in the Babylonian myth, Apsu and Tiamat. The atmosphere when the bath was used is described there. The water was of the five rivers. The pond was full of white lotus with whose honey the water had sweetened. The atmosphere was fragrant and in the pond groups of apsaras were dancing and singing. Varuṇa owns this as his world. In fact it seems that more ponds of this kind may have been in use. As for example even now there is a place called Pokharan, north of Kotrash where remains and citadel of Amri culture have been located by N.G. Majumdar. The word Pokharan derived from *puṣkariṇī* (or rather the other way round i.e. *puṣkariṇī* might have been borrowed or coined later on from an already existing word nearer to Pokharan cp. Pali, *pokkhara*, Skt. *puṣkara*).

This leads on to the concept of Svarga which is attained by the

devas after the destruction of the asuras, as described in Chapter III.14 above. The description of the events at the pond (or the Great Bath of the archaeologists) is the type of life associated with *Svarga* in popular belief. So in all probability the *Svarga* the devas attained was no different than the conquest of the citadel, as the bath was also situated on it. The terrestrial nature of *Suvarga* is emphasized by the devas being hungry after attaining it. The height of the citadel and its towering position above the lower city created an impression that it was in the air, above the earth. Once this association was formed, it was not difficult to lift it from air to heaven. Thus the citadel, the symbol of worldly prosperity and political authority of the Asuras, was transformed into the heaven.

8. Conflagrations in the Indus valley

The use of fire by the devas is discussed above in Chapter III-11. Archaeological data throw only occasional hints of fire while literary sources make frequent mention of fire.

The Asuras were probably fire-worshippers. This is implied in the hymn where agni says that he was with Father Asura for a long time, or, that 'when I leave him who was friendly in an unfriendly way, I go from one's regular friendship to the foreign kinship'. That the Aryans took over the fire-worship from the Asuras is also stated in the same hymn (ṚV X.124) by saying that from exclusion, he has now arrived at a status where he can have a share in the sacrifice. In fact, the concept of sacrifice was adopted by the Aryans with some changes. The consensus to use fire in the struggle, and the adaptation of the concept of sacrifice, is graphically described as the consent of Agni to work for Aryan victory if he is given a share in the sacrifice.

That the Aryans made use of fire in their fight against the Asuras is quite certain from the vivid descriptions available in Ṛgveda. The hymns addressed to agni are not directed to its anthropomorphisation and its use but, as the descriptions make it clear, it is plain and simple fire. If this is so, many traces of conflagrations should be found. From the Ṛgveda, one gathers the impression that fire was used to burn people, their houses, their belongings, to evict them, to kill them. Archaeological findings support this partially and such material is discussed below. But the evidence for conflagrations caused by the Aryans to block the way of the fleeing population is practically unknown so far. The evidence of fires at Rana Ghundai IV and V and at Sohr Damb and Dabar Kot seems to be of a local nature rather than of a widespread conflagration. Moreover, the nature of the narrative in ŚB I.2.4.8-13 suggests that it must have been in the northern passes or some other strategic routes which were used for escaping. More field work is necessary to prove this claim of the Brāhmaṇas.

Even about the fires, little is said in the reports of the first excavators of the sites of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. The site of Harappa should show, if literary sources were reporting facts, that the destruction was greater through fire, as it was the only alternative to floods. It was not possible to flood Harappa extensively and therefore it is more likely that fire might have been used there on a larger scale than elsewhere. However, it is difficult to check this possibility on account of the extensive brick robbing that went on till 1920. It is said in one of the early reports that till 1919 A.D. there was no kiln for baking bricks in the areas around Harappa! Only in 1920 when the site came under the classification of protected sites, that the brick quarrying was stopped and the inhabitants of the villages and towns in the surrounding areas had to make new arrangements for bricks by starting a kiln. Still more careful excavations at Mohenjo-daro and even the unexcavated parts of Harappa might reveal traces of fires in the last phases of the cities.

As far as Harappa is concerned, no big deposits of ash and charcoal are reported, except that in the granary-area burnt wheat is found around the circular working platforms. About Mohenjo-daro, Marshall has remarked: "The wood-carver's craft was one of the most ancient in India, and nowhere did his skill show itself more than in the fashioning of architectural members into appropriate shapes and the embellishing of them with pleasing devices. We know, moreover, from the evidence of the fires which consumed many of the Mohenjo-daro buildings, that wood must have been freely used in their superstructures..."[140] It is clear from this observation that the fires were noticed not for the havoc they might have wrought but secondarily for the use of wood in architecture. Out of the two upper class houses described by him, one has been destroyed through fire. Here again the fire that destroyed the house was not the primary concern but it is plastering of the wall that is being discussed. 'The walls of the entrance hall were finished in clay plaster, a large patch which still adheres to the western wall. It is about 3/4 in. thick, and composed of mud and chopped grass, finished off with a finer wash of clay. This plaster has been half converted into terracotta by the fire which destroyed the house, and it is due to this circumstance alone that this specimen of plaster has been preserved. Had the building not happened to have been burnt down, all trace of the plaster would have perished, as it has perished in most of the houses at Mohenjo-daro."[141] In a footnote (no. 1) he adds: 'The same phenomenon is observable in several other houses at Mohenjo-daro...' the ceiling of one of the rooms of the same house was carried on rafters of deodar, 'the charred ends of which were found still imbedded in the walls'. In the upper storey of this house, timber might have been used on large scale which 'was evident from the abundance of charcoal among the debris and from the fact that the fire which destroyed the house was fierce enough to fuse the surface of some of the walls.' The upper storey surrounding the Great

Bath was also burnt which is testified by 'quantities of charcoal and ashes' found in the course of excavations. To these a few more instances can be added as for example L Area, Block 9, room 97, etc. In many cases both Marshall and Mackay have expressed a surprise on finding the debris of ash, charcoal, broken brick etc. in the earlier levels of the buildings, as they thought that fires were always guarded against in earlier days when the civilization was in a flourishing state. An explanation of this phenomenon, if the observations and impressions of these excavators are correct, may be that at least in a few cases the debris might have fallen down from higher levels in the operations for brick quarrying.

Along with these findings may also be considered other similar observations which have the distinction of their having been observed in well-stratified context. In his excavations in 1964, Dales has made the following observations: 'Late period remains were directly beneath the thin Squatter level and in places were even exposed on the mound surface. There were suggestions that some of the rooms had been hastily abandoned. Cooking pots were found on one of the floors, while another room had been severely burned. A thick layer of straw and chaff had smoldered on the floor after the roof collapsed. Most important was the discovery of burned wooden door jambs, still in place in a doorway leading from this room.' Dales himself has questioned the theory of the sack of the city by foreigners, but what do the burning of the room and the abandoned cooking pots suggest? That the inhabitants had to flee from their houses, even leaving the food which was being cooked and probably to save their life. His next discovery is even more 'startling' as he describes it, in the upper levels of the HR mound. 'Between walls bordering a narrow alleyway was found a very thick accumulation of collapsed brick, ash, and broken pottery. Enmeshed in this debris were found five skeletons. They resemble some thirty others found earlier at this site not buried in any normal way but the victims of some disaster.'[142]

Although the archaeological evidence is too scanty to conclude definitely about the correctness of Ṛgvedic material, more evidence in accurately stratified context may be looked for in future field work.

Dales' observations suggest that these fires may not be altogether accidental but probably engineered by an agency to look stray and accidental. As a more recent example of such fires may be cited some of those which have been reported from the Kashmir valley. There the fires are sudden and without any apparent cause and seem to be used to evict people from their houses. As has been already seen, Ṛgvedic hymns (I.133 etc.) contain descriptions of the defeated enemies of the Aryans inhabiting the dilapidated and ruined houses, and Indra being

asked to burn all such rakṣas and piśācas. It is likely that the fires were used as a means of evicting these people from their shelters. If they came out, the Aryans would kill them. If they did not, then their destiny did not differ much from those who were found under the debris. In any case, they were destined to die. The end of those who came out is testified by those sprawling skeletons found in various parts of the cities.

Besides these two cities, the use of fire is testified at Lothal where a structure resembling the base of a granary like the one located on the citadel mound of Mohenjo-daro is unearthed. The upper part of the building had 'presumably been of timber; it has been burnt, and baked and twisted clay sealings of normal Indus type had fallen from the stored bales into the ducts'. The complete reports on this and Kalibangan sites are not available in print and it is not possible to examine the ravages of fire.

Although much is said about the houses and fortresses of the Asuras and their destruction by the Aryans under the leadership of Indra, nowhere do the Ṛgvedic hymns mention the houses or even the shelters of the Aryans. On the other hand, as has been noted above (Chapter III.13) the ŚB explicitly states that when the devas were moving in carts, the asuras were sitting in their houses. In the context of sacrificial arrangements also the nomadic life of the Aryans is emphasized in the Taittirīya school. This is also the meaning of the word arya if it is derived from √ṛ, to wander etc. as has been already discussed.

Further the asura pottery the use of which is banned in Aryan rituals for the dead is said to be wheel-made. This also corresponds with the findings of the archaeologists. The typical Harappan pottery found on all the sites is wheel-made, of well-levigated clay, of uniform shapes and painted decoration. Archaeologically it is described as black-on-red meaning thereby the painted designs on black appear on a red slip applied to pots before firing. The Aryan preference for the handmade pot in rituals may indicate that originally the rituals were performed with the handmade pots or it may also indicate the purposeful choice of handmade pottery as opposed to the wheel-made one which was so typical of the Asuras.

Not much information about pottery, so very dear to the archaeologists, is available in the literary sources. This may serve to point out the exaggerated importance this particular item of man's material existence has assumed in archaeology, though understandably on account of its imperishable nature. It assumes its legitimate place in the literary sources.

Special mention may be made of a type of earthen vessel more or

less cylindrical with perforations all over the body excepting the rim. Some of the smaller vessels of this type might have been used as portable heaters. Others especially of bigger size might have been used as beer-brewers for a type of beer called *surā* which as has been noted above was not the tipple of Indra, unlike soma which he could consume in large quantities. It may have been rather a drink of ordinary life an accompaniment to dice with which it is associated in ṚV and Atharvaveda. The asuric association of *surā* might be conjectured not alone by the unacquaintance of Indra and his unsuspected consumption leading to an illness called *surāma* but the *surā-kāra*, maker of *surā* appearing in the list of victims for *Puruṣamedha* in VS (XXX.11) might reinforce it. The name *surā* in fact might have been **Asurā*, a drink of the Asuras which was later in the days of wholesale adaptation and transformation of asuric culture simply became *surā*, the drink of gods.

9. The burial rites

The burial rites generally ascribed to the asuras in the Vedic literature have been discussed in Chapter III.13. The general features of the burial rites reflected in these sources may be briefly summed up as inhumation with grave furniture, consisting of pottery, containing food, clothes and ornaments. The grave-pits were round or oval. Sometimes *camū*, pot or basin is also used. The belief underlying these practices is that the dead will conquer the next world with the help of these things.

These practices are directly paralleled on the Indus civilization sites. One cemetery known as cemetery R 37 has been discovered at Harappa in 1937, besides a later one called cemetery H. The first cemetery is composed of one and the same stratum was continuously in use. 'The body was extended occasionally on one side or the other, with the head to the north.' The dimensions of the pit were 10 to 15 feet in length and 2½ to 10 feet in width, the depth being 2 feet. The large size of the pit was probably meant to include the grave furniture which was kept either near the head or at the feet of the body. It was also sometimes kept along the sides of the body. The pots accompanying the body ranged from 2 to 40 with an average of 15 to 20. The pottery types were the same as those occurred on the habitation sites of the Harappa culture. The bodies were sometimes interred with personal ornaments. A copper ring on the right finger of right hand, two steatite necklaces, anklets of paste beads, and an earring of thin copper wire were found on some skeletons whereas shell bangles and beads of steatite and paste are found accompanying most commonly. In the grave furniture, besides pottery and personal ornaments, are also found toilet objects like hand copper mirror, mother-of-pearl shells, an antimony stick, a large shell spoon. In one case, a small handled lamp is found at the feet of a skeleton. The excavations do not bear any traces of clothing, if there

had been any put on the skeleton at the time of interment. If there had been some clothing, it may have rotten away. However, that some clothing may have been put on the dead at the time of burying may be inferred from some other circumstance. The excavator first thought it to be reed shroud.[143] Later changing his mind, he identified the wooden covering as coffin, making it the only coffin-burial found in the Indus civilization. The coffin was large enough to accommodate the body without any constriction. It must have had a lid as suggested by the streaks of sticky black substance running over the toes. Although the excavator now seems to identify what he originally thought to be a reed shroud, as the 'traces of the lid on the sandy material immediately overlying the skeleton',[144] the lid seems to fit exactly to the torso of the skeleton. The lower end of the lid also is suspiciously straight. On the whole the impression one gets from the photographs of this burial is that the wooden piece on top of the skeleton is rather cut to fit the size of the skeleton and set there, rather than fallen from above as a lid would. Under any circumstances, the burial is unique whether the wooden cover is a coffin lid or a reed shroud. The grave furniture consisting of thirty-seven pots was placed outside the wooden cover in a pit measuring 11 feet long, 5½ feet to 6½ feet wide and 2½ feet deep. On the middle finger of the right hand was a plain copper ring, to the left of the head was one shell ring and two to the left shoulder.

Another burial of unusual nature discovered in 1946 had mud-brick lining around the body and a heaped mud-brick filling at the southern end of the grave. Two pots indicating Harappan affiliations were also reported.

At Kalibangan[145] from the Harappan stratum, two types of burials are reported: extended inhumation and pot burial, the latter is found for the first time in true Harappan cemetery. In the first type of burial a skeleton was found in an extended position with its head to the north in an oblong pit. As in the case of the skeletons of cemetery R 37, the grave furniture consisting of pottery was kept near the head of the skeleton. In one case, a copper or bronze mirror was also found. The pit was filled with the earth which was dug out. The second type of burial (?) corresponds more or less with the description found in ŚB and already discussed. In this case the pit was oval or circular in plan in which was kept an urn. Besides the urn, there were the other pots by way of grave goods clustering around the urn, their number varying from four to twenty-nine. Some of the pits also contained beads, shell bangles, and steatite objects. No skeletal remains or pots were found inside the urn, which seems to be the most singular feature of these burials.

In one case, a regularly brick-lined grave rich in grave goods was found. It was almost rectangular in plan (which would incidentally suit the interpretation of *camū*, basin, suggested by Eggeling) and lined on

all sides with mud bricks set in thick mud plaster. The side walls were interlocked in a clockwise form at each end. The grave goods consisted of seventy-two pots and were divided in two groups at the top and the middle. The skeleton was placed over the latter deposit in a supine condition with its head to the north.

Another type of curious grave in which the skeletal remains are completely absent is found at Kalibangan. However, as no complete report is yet available, it is not possible to discuss the possible implications of such a grave.

Rupar cemetery has revealed several burials. Out of these one closely resembles a clay coffin or a clay basin in which the skeleton rests.[146] Other graves give the impression of having been circular or oval on account of the rounding off of the corners. All the burials have grave goods consisting of the pots of all sizes numbering four to twenty-six. The oval or roughly speaking circular shape of graves is paralleled at Ur and even an oval coffin of clay is reported.[147]

Before concluding the discussion on burial rites of the people who inhabited the Indo-Gangetic plain before the advent of the Aryans, it is essential to scrutinise the burial rites reflected in the late cemetery H at Harappa. Wheeler in his excavations in 1946 obtained clear indications of its chronology. Cemetery H is clearly later than cemetery R 37, though the time lag cannot be guessed exactly at this stage. It is composed of two strata. Stratum I, the upper and later, consists of pot-burials, containing with some exceptions nothing but human bones which were placed there after the exposure of the dead body. There is no accompanying grave furniture, as found in Cemetery R 37. The pots are decorated with motifs which differ completely from those on the Harappan pottery. Some of the favourite motifs are peacock-like birds often with horns, and with a human shape drawn in its body, standing amongst stars and rows of leaves. Another motif is that of two animals, probably bulls, with long horns on either side of a beaked human figure who has secured them with a rope. One of the two bulls is attacked by a dog. Stratum II, the earlier one, and underlying immediately below the layer of pot-burials consisted of inhumation. Part of this stratum contained whole burials whereas in another part they were invariably fractional. In both these areas the pot-burials were absent. However, unlike the first stratum these graves had funeral furniture. The body was laid in the pit in an extended position, lying on its back and in some cases on the side with legs flexed. Some burials were thought to be fractional. The pottery accompanying these may be described as a red-ware with black paintings having "no significant affinity with the Harappan unless vaguely in the presence of 'cake-stands', squatter and more elaborately moulded than those of the earlier culture". But these have

resemblances especially in the painted motifs of stylized peacocks, the slim waisted bulls and the general *horror vacui* which make the two strata of cemetery H an evolution of one and the same culture. The differences between the two may be due to the function the pottery is meant to serve rather than to cultural factors.

The hiatus between the Harappan cemetery R 37 and cemetery H reduces the possibilities of the cemetery H folks being the destroyers of the Harappa culture. The burial practices reflected in cemetery H do not fulfil an important requirement for it to be the cemetery of the Aryans. As has been clearly stated by Vats, these pot-burials in which are found the traces of a new skull type, the round-heads, are post-exposure and not post-cremation burials belonging to the urnfield type found in the western region or have to bear traces of bright red ochre as found in the barrows of the 'Kurgan' people. Moreover, the obvious importance of these two practices, the latter in a somewhat modified form in the later Hindu culture, suggests that these must have been brought by the Aryans with them in India and preserved as the significant mark of Aryan culture. From this point of view, the coincidence, at least at the present stage, of the colour of the ochre ware which is post-Harappan or at times overlapping with the late Harappan is significant and might serve as a clue as to the identity of its makers. The cremation and the disposal of the bones in water has been the practice in Hinduism and mention of it is made in the Xth maṇḍala of Ṛgveda in a context which may be completely Aryan. Whereas the reference to earthen home *mṛṇmayaṃ gṛham*, might be treated as symbolic of death to the Asuras, as it is mentioned in a verse attributed to Vasiṣṭha, son of Mitra and Varuṇa, addressed to Varuṇa. The gerua or bright red ochre plays conspicuous part in the religious life of the Hindus. All that is holy and sacred is anointed with an oily paste of ochre colour called *sindur* and in fact such is its magic that ordinary stones are raised to the status of divinity by the mere touch of the *sindur*. The use of red ochre on the barrow skeletons must have had some such significance.

The cemetery H people seemed to be at least in the earlier stratum some way related to the Harappans by way of the burial rites and in some of the affinities to which archaeologists do not seem to attach much significance. The gradual change in the rites has been noted by Vats, although he was not very firm about calling it the intermediate stage.[148] The human bones found in Area G ditch bear traces of having been exposed for some time to atmosphere and buried at a later stage. The change in the burial rites might be explained by the influence of the Asuras who had fled to Iran. Later they professed Zoroastrianism and practised the exposure of the dead in the *dakhmas*, or towers of silence. In any case the affiliation of the people whose dead were buried in cemetery H may be found with the Harappans and later with the descen-

dants of the Asuras who had fled to Iran and the western regions. If the influence of cemetery H observed by Deshpande in Bargaon is correct, one may expect a certain amount of reorganization coming into existence in post-Harappan days with Harappa exercising certain influence on the local tradition. The fact that at Bargaon typically Harappan pottery was found along with—the stratification is not clear in the source[149] at my disposal—Ochre Colour ware and pottery showing cemetery H influence might prove to be of significance in setting up the correlations of the various cultures and the Indus civilization. The case may further be strengthened by pointing out the continuity of the skull types. The round heads found in cemetery H stratum I are present in earlier stratum also and therefore there really was no significant change in the composition of the population.

10. The Five Peoples

The skulls of skeletons unearthed at Mohenjo-daro and the two cemeteries at Harappa have been measured by anthropologists to determine the racial affinities of the people. The skeletons discovered in the streets and other places of Mohenjo-daro have been examined by Messrs Sewell and Guha and have been classified by them under four distinct types. Type I is described as the Proto-Austroloid. Three skulls were found to be of this type. Second type is the Mediterranean of which six specimens were measured. This type was also found at Nal and at Kish, Anau, and Ur. The third type belongs to the Mongolian branch of the Alpine stock which, when compared with the present Naga skull leaves 'no room for doubt regarding the racial origin of the individual'. One skull belonging to this type has been reported from Mohenjo-daro. The type is found at Nal in the company of the second type. Besides these several terracotta figurines with Mongoloid features have been discovered at Mohenjo-daro.[149a] Fourth is called the Alpine of which four skulls were found.[150]

The report on the skeletal remains of the two cemeteries at Harappa has been prepared by the Anthropological Survey of India and the skulls have been classified under five headings A, A_1, B, B_1 and B_2.[151] Type A and A_1 are found in cemetery R 37 of the mature Harappan culture. The first type A was long-headed, tall, rugged and sturdy built, having pronounced eye-brow ridges, receding forehead, broad nose with depressed root. Type A_1 was long-headed, gracile, comparatively shorter, finer and weaker. Type A is described as 'Proto-Austroloid' or 'Caucasic'. A subvariety of this type has been described as 'Proto-Nordic' or 'Caspian'. Type A_1 is called 'Mediterranean', 'Caspian' or 'Indo-European'.

In cemetery H, stratum II, the skull-types similar to types A and

A_1 of cemetery R 37 have been discovered besides a third type described as a rather tall, large- and round-headed (type B_2). In the later stratum I, in addition to the three types A, A_1 and B_2, another type rather medium statured, small- and medium-headed, low-faced people (type A_2, females only) was discovered.

The skulls found packed in a pit along with Harappan pottery and also small number of cemetery H sherds in a narrow trench in Area G were also measured. The skulls were classified into types A_1 and B_1. Type A_1 is the same long-headed having great many resemblances with the long-headed gracile type A_1 of cemetery R 37. The other type B_1 described as mesocranic or brachycranic is thought of as the extraneous group, attacking the long-heads, the autochthonous people. Many of the skulls in this trench showed signs of cuts and abrasions. The state of the skeletons suggests that the bodies were collected in a heap in an attempt to clear the place of the signs of conflict and massacre. Possibly the bodies thus thrown together were those of the pre-Aryans killed by the Aryans. These were left there, probably for some time so that the birds and beasts of prey had removed parts of them leaving them incomplete. This accounts for the incomplete nature of the skeletons. The type of skull found in this trench may thus represent one of the pre-Aryan peoples.

It is difficult for a non-anthropologist to make out anything from the information given above. At best one may perceive that two racial types are common to Mohenjo-daro and Harappa—Proto-Austroloid and Mediterranean. Type B_2 is described as 'the Alpine Variant' comparable with skulls from Hissar III and may correspond to the Alpine type at Mohenjo-daro. Although the anthropological report suggests that type A_2 may be 'in all probability not identical with the earlier population of the Harappan culture', it may perhaps be worthwhile for the specialists in this field to compare this type A_2 with the round-heads called B_1 found in Area G trench or with the Alpine type itself. It seems probable that the people whose bodies or skeletons were thrown together were both enemies of the Aryans as testified by the cuts and abrasions on the skulls. Had they been those of Aryans, the bodies would not have been left there to be eaten by birds or to rot away. The small amount of cemetery H pottery may only mean that the area was packed at a later stage. Thus now the problem is posed by the round-heads; the relationship between types A_2, B_1 and B_2 need to be re-examined, especially between A_2 and B_1.

In Ṛgveda the foes of the Aryans are said to be dark-skinned. As for example the 50,000 warriors of Asura Pipru are described as 'black brood'. These dark warriors may be identified with the Proto-Austroloid element found in the skull types and with the Rakṣas of Ṛgveda and

Rākṣasas of later tradition. The survival of Brāhui, a language belonging to the Dravidian family may be an additional argument. Besides this the existence of the name Rakhshan (=Raksan) of an area situated very near where Brāhui is spoken may provide yet another clue. A site identified as Harappan and called Rākhigarhi (the fortress of rākṣas, rākhi being its Prākṛt form) has been excavated recently. The phenomenon of a people of a racial stock speaking a language, otherwise associated with another racial stock, is shown by Risley in his study of the similarity of physical type, such as that which exists between the Male of Rajmahal and Oraon of Chota Nagpur, who are both Dravidians linguistically, and the Mundas and Santals, who are Kolarians. It clearly shows a common racial stock although the language used is of different origin.[152] But the question remains: at what stage has the change set in and what were the circumstances which led to the change?

It is not unlikely that in prehistoric days the arid region of Baluchistan was occupied by these people. That this physical type is probably the strongest in the Indus valley and the constant association of the Rakṣas in Ṛgveda and the Brāhmaṇas with the Asuras who put up a strong resistance to the advancing Aryan tribes may probably provide an important clue to their function in the Asura kingdom. They probably formed its military force which will incidentally be supported by the original meaning of the term rakṣas, viz. protectors and not injurers or destroyers as the later Hindu tradition always depicts them. Moreover, a mountainous and arid region always produces a sturdy race which can withstand the struggle for survival necessitated by the climatic and geographical conditions. This type is also reflected in the features of the statuette of the dancing girl.

The second type common to Harappa and Mohenjo-daro is the Mediterranean which, as its geographical spread suggests, may be the type to which the Asuras belonged. The male sculptured heads found in Mohenjo-daro, Kalibangan, Chanhu-daro, and Dabar Kot, may supply evidence as to the cultural heritage and affiliations of these people, besides their physiognomy. It appears that male figures in seated posture or the heads, brought together by Wheeler[153] seem to be depicting either a divinity or a human ancestor of remote antiquity which is indicated by the highly stylized features of the statues. It is obvious from the statuette of the dancing girl, the male torsos (though of doubtful period), the male dancer found at Harappa and the innumerable seals that the Harappan artists had the technical skill and imagination to produce life-like pieces. However, the very fact that these statuettes were modelled in a rudimentary manner may imply that certain time-hallowed traditions about facial features, posture (cross-legged) and ornamentation of the statues were being observed. In this respect, the cultural affiliations of the people as reflected in the sculptures are: the fillet which

keeps the hair in place, the long hair tied in a bun above the neck, the shaven upper lip and the shell inlay for the eyes. There is also the manner in which an upper garment is shown covering the left arm whereas the right arm and shoulder are left bare. All these features are found in Mesopotamia, in life and in art. Several gold and silver fillets have been discovered on Indus sites.[154] A terracotta human figurine was discovered by Wheeler in his 1950 excavations on the site of the granary in the citadel of Mohenjo-daro and described as 'flat-bodied representation seemingly of a definite (Semitic ?) ethnic type, with long nose and receding, fleshy chin'.[155] This figure also has a fillet round his head, which means that it formed an invariable item of male dress. In fact even behind the stylization of various sculptures, this type is much apparent. If the identification from the physical type as depicted in the terracotta figurine and as illustrated in the stylization, as belonging to a Semitic ethnic type is correct, the people called Asuras in Ṛgveda must also have been Semitic as their name and cultural affinities suggest. The facial features found in the terracotta figurine at Mohenjo-daro, the male head in Dabar Kot and other sculptures can still be noticed in the present Parasis, followers of Zoroastrianism and also in the Kokaṇastha Cittapāvan Brahmins of Maharashtra.

The Alpine variant, the third ethnic type, is determined on the basis of the skeletal remains as represented at Sialk during Periods II, III and IV.[156] This relatively short-headed element is present in the Indian population scattered over many different regions. This type may correspond with the type represented by the sculptured head found at Mundigak IV and with the Gandharvas of Ṛgveda who hailed from that region.

To the fourth type viz. the Mongolian branch of the Alpine stock may belong the Yakṣas and the Piśācas who, as has been shown above, might be the tribe called Khaśa, identical with present Khasias. It is interesting to note that the language of Khaśas was closely allied to Sanskrit (in Mahābhārata and later days), but more importantly with a vocabulary that of the Iranian Avesta.[157] Besides this, Grierson has also noted some peculiarities of languages spoken by the Piśācas and also Kashmiri which he classes as 'Piśāca group', alien 'to the Aryan languages of the Indian plains. Several of these are clearly observable in various forms of Western and Central Pahari—strong in the extreme west, but becoming weaker and weaker eastwards. It is reasonable to infer that in this we have traces of the old language of the Khaśas, whom Sanskrit tradition relates to the Piśācas.'[158] A language known as Yakhābhāsā may possibly have been the language of the Yakṣas.

Dāśas of the Ṛgveda were obviously a dark-skinned people and might have belonged to the Proto-Austroloid stock. The ethnic affinities

of the Paṇis may have been the same as the Asuras i.e. the Mediterranean. Dasyus might have belonged to the same racial stock as the Dāśas.

Thus the four ethnic types perceived in the skulls found at the sites of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro bear similarities to the characteristic of peoples mentioned in the Ṛgveda as the foes of the Aryan tribes. The cities built by these peoples reflecting modern concepts like town-planning, public works and a sanitary system coupled with civic sense were destroyed by the Aryans more through the treacherous elements within the peoples and their disgruntled and greedy office-bearers than through heroism or bravery. The credit for the close-knit organisation must go to the Asuras. It was a social structure within which the indigenous populations and its civilization also found place. In fact, the precocious maturity displayed in the ruins of the Indus civilization, which could boast of many innovations still unknown to their highly civilized neighbours in Iran and Mesopotamia, might have been the consequence of the transplantation of the Asura genius coupled with the vitality and talent of the pre-Harappan peoples and the successful use of the natural resources available in the Indus valley.

11. Cosmic and social structure

Thus the so-called mythic beings were originally human beings. Their only sin which deprived them of their human identity was that they resisted the advance of the Aryan clans onto the Indo-Gangetic plain. They not only suffered defeat and destruction at the hands of the Aryans but the latter, while commemorating their victory, made these peoples into arch-villains, incarnations of Evil in action, speech and thought and even as simple idiots who could not comprehend what was happening to them. Thus were born the demons of the Aryan mythology. Their very names came to be associated with evil, death and destruction. Their creative capacity became powers of illusion and their houses, emptiness. To restore the human identity of the Asuras and others was the first objective. There seems to be ample evidence to this end.

The archaeological corroboration of the literary evidence, especially of the new interpretations suggested above, leaves little doubt that the conflict of the Aryans and the Asuras and the others took place historically. Even in the Indian tradition, confused and overlaid by encrustations of myth, a school called *aitihāsikas* considered these events historical. Sāyaṇa in his commentary on Ṛgveda has referred to it. As for example in his comment on I.130.8,9 he says: *atreti itihāsamācakṣate*/ Here is seen (a reference to) history. This is in connection with the dark complexioned foes of Indra. The next verse dealing with the episode of Uśanā is also glossed by Sāyaṇa as '*atrāpi itihāsamācakṣate*'

here too may be seen (a reference to) history. Sāyaṇa commenting upon the Vṛtra- and the Purukutsa-episodes, which were considered historical events by a school of Ṛgvedic criticism, says: *ayamaitihāsikapakṣaḥ*, so (says) the historical school. Thus even the later generations were not completely unfamiliar with the correct meaning of the events described in Ṛgveda, which was, however, weakened by the religious system created on its basis at a later stage.

The Aryans probably sang these hymns in praise of their heroes Indra and Viṣṇu and also for Agni with a sense of gratitude for the risk the two heroes had run for the sake of rehabilitating their tribes, for gaining land for the Aryan people. They were impressed by their bravery. Probably the heroism of their two leaders forms the subject of majority of hymns which have been spontaneous utterances but were based on a well-established practice amongst the Indo-Europeans which is also reflected in a class of myths current among the Greeks. Lewis Farvell[159] has distinguished seven types of heroes: Hieratic hero-gods of cult origin; sacral heroes or heroines who are associated with a god perhaps as priest or priestess; *secular figures* who eventually became fully divinized; epic heroes; fictitious eponyms and genealogical heroes; functional and cultural daemons and finally a few real men (that is, men who certainly lived) who were made heroes after their deaths and given minor cults within the full historical period. Out of these seven types of heroes, it appears that the Ṛgveda heroes Indra and Viṣṇu belonged to the last type viz. real men. Probably they were deified after their death for their heroic deeds and also a cult was dedicated to them. It appears that this practice hails back to the days when the Indo-European tribes had not yet dispersed in different directions. Originally some hymns may have been addressed to the heroes exalting their greatness on the battlefield and later their deeds were thought to be great enough to create a cult out of it. This seems to be one of the explanations of the Vedic religion as reflected in Ṛgveda and the Brāhmaṇas.

Thus the Ṛgveda hymns describe events as they may have taken place when the Aryans entered India and that the peoples who fought with the Aryans were the Asuras, the Gandharvas, the Rakṣas, the Yakṣas and the Piśācas. These five peoples had reached a high state of civilization. Their destruction was brought about by the Aryans through dissension and bribery of important personnel, by securing the strategic positions. The chief means of destruction was the control of the sluice gates of the dam on the five rivers. The water was released leading to untimely floods which paralysed the settlements located on the lower Indus. The details of the 'operation Indus' if it may be called thus may be reconstructed as follows:

The Aryans entered India through the north-western passes. Their

southward advance was constantly checked by the military force of the Asuras, known as the Rakṣas. They suffered several defeats at the hands of these people. Their leader or king at this time was probably Viṣṇu. At last with great difficulty, they succeed in gaining a foot-hold, enough for them to lie down. Making that their base Viṣṇu makes excursions in disguise in the Asura-region in order to find out the strategically weak points of the Asuras. He makes three such excursions and finally comes out with a strategy. The first step in the strategy was to take advantage of the discontent brewing in the Asura officials in key-positions like the *purohita*, Uśanas, thus making holes in the disciplined and tight organization of the Asuras. Then having won over an important official like Uśanas who was probably not a priest but was in charge of eviction operations and as such enjoyed a privileged position, the Aryans got access to the innermost secrets of the Asuras, as also their armoury and strategically weak points. At this point Indra was probably elected the war leader. Besides Uśanas, the Maruts and many others also changed sides. With the assistance of these and the weapons like vajra, the thunderbolt provided by Uśanas, Indra by killing Vṛtra, the guard of the dam across the seven rivers, brought under his control the sluice gates which he opened in order to flood the downstream settlements, thus causing panic and damage to life and property in that area. Besides this, the Aryans also decided to use fire to drive away the population from their houses. By now the large scale material damage caused by the untimely floods demoralised the population, making the collapse of civil and military authority more than apparent. In addition to this, the houses were set on fire at night. The people had not suspected and also were unprepared to meet the situation. They fled the city. In the next round, the fires were used mainly to evict the people from their houses. The political and military authority on the other hand was paralysed by the large scale treachery of the officials who had joined the enemy and there was nothing else left for Varuṇa, the king of Asuras but to receive Indra as the victorious leader of the Aryans. One of the hymns of Ṛgveda describes this meeting and in another Indra invites Varuṇa to be the co-ruler of the Aryans.

Thus the wars described in the Ṛgvedic hymns were fought between human beings, between the Aryans and the Asuras, Rakṣas, Gandharvas, Piśācas, Yakṣas, Dāśas, Paṇis and others. Ṛgveda contains hymns sung by the Aryan poets at a later date to celebrate the great victory which gave them the possession of agricultural land and to extoll their heroes who were later bestowed the status of gods for their bravery. At best Indra and Viṣṇu might have belonged to the aristocracy which existed in the Aryan tribes from earlier days and the victory in the land of five rivers gained for them special positions, resulting in their being deified in later days. The so-called Vedic pantheon contains these two Aryan leaders, the majority of the rest

being the various officials of Varuṇa's government. Thus what is called pantheon is not really composed of gods but are the officials of the government. The composition of the cabinet and function of each of its members will be discussed in the next chapter.

As has been shown, Ṛgvedic hymns as they were composed originally, were meant to be realistic narratives of events. It has also been demonstrated in the foregoing pages how far it is possible to penetrate into the mythic encrustations and restore the original realistic sense. Later when the Aryans wanted to create religion out of this victory which won them the fertile land, they converted the battles and their ultimate conquest into a rite in which fire was central. In this transformation, three things played important part: First was the concept of *ṛta*, cosmic and moral order. As soon as they arrogated to themselves, as victors, the Good, they became the gods and the vanquished came to represent the evil, the demoniac forces in the universe. Thus the Aryans Indra and Viṣṇu became the gods and the Asuras, the Rakṣas and the others, the enemies of the Aryans, became the demons who created constant disturbances in the godly pursuits by their evil nature. The concept of *ṛta*, discussed later, shows it to be basic concept of the Asura ideology. Secondly, the idea of religion as the conflict between good and evil itself, as shown in Chapter XI.2, was borrowed from the religion of the Asuras. Thirdly, the worship of fire was also an important aspect of the Asura religion. This too was borrowed by the Aryans for the obvious reason that fire was helpful to them in their battles against their enemies. Thus all the three ideas which were part of Asura *weltanschaung* were adopted by the Aryans, simultaneously transforming the Asuras and others into forces of evil. The transformation did not stop here. On the social level, the remnants of the Asura-population were given the lowest status in the Aryan social structure and were forbidden participation in the newly created religion. The transformation of the Aryan victory into a religion may have served one purpose and that is it was presented in a form acceptable even to those who were the vanquished. The mythopoeic constructions and rites led to the formation of cults based on the events during the struggle. This was done through the deification of the Aryan heroes and the vilification of their enemies. With this change the plane of events was shifted to the cosmic level and the language underwent a subtle change and the actions became symbolic and ritualistic. The justification for the change in the meaning of the words probably would be that the Aryan point of view of the struggle was being represented. No victor has ever been appreciative of his enemy, which the asuras were to the devas. Once this is accepted then the later change of meaning can be easily understood. Thus the wars between the Aryans and the Asuras, the gods and the demons were fought under the name of sacrifice, through fire and ghee, *aṣṭāḳapāla* (sacrificial cake) and the wooden swords. While doing this, the details of the parts

memories, not meaningful understanding of the rites, of these were preserved in the daily rites prescribed by the *Śrutīs* and *Smṛtīs*. The cults flourishing in the lower stratum became stronger and the need for absorbing these into the so-called Brahmanic religion arose. They were absorbed but they swamped Brahmanism without leaving even the meaning of sacrifices behind. This amalgam of cultic practices and the philosophies came to be known as Hinduism. It rightly came to be known as Hindu Dharma, i.e. the Hindu religion, Hindu being the Persian form of Sindhu. Thus even in the name the practices went backa gain to the Indus valley, whatever the historical circumstances behind the name.

PART III

PART III

XII

1. Introduction

As has been shown above, the so-called mythic beings, the asuras, the rakṣas, the gandharvas, the yakṣas and the piśācas were really peoples who were spread over the Indo-Gangetic plain and beyond (on the western banks of Indus). This region was probably administered by a single system which has been a wonder to the archaeologists. Despite this, little is known about the system itself.

Since the human identity of the asuras and others as the peoples inhabiting this vast area at the time of the Aryan advent in India has been established in the foregoing pages, it is now possible to find out certain details about the system of administration set up by these people. As is evident from Ṛgveda, these peoples had settled there long enough and were well-versed in agriculture, technology, engineering, sea-faring and trade and had established a control on the river waters by setting up dams and irrigation channels. All this presupposes a well-knit and long-established system of administration which could run efficiently year after year and had the potential of meeting the needs of an expanding empire.

The hypothesis that is put forth below is this: The so-called Vedic pantheon with the exceptions of Indra and Viṣṇu is composed of the functionaries of the government of Asura empire having its capital in the Indus valley. As such in each case, the natural phenomenon associated with each functionary, and the relationship between the phenomenon and the function is pointed out. Also an attempt is made to account for the number of hymns addressed to each one. The hypothesis put forth is that they are in direct proportion to the part played by the individual in the conflict between the Aryans and the Asuras. The emphasis in each case is on bringing out the Asura-origin, relationship and the place in the cosmic and social structure. Along with this the political, socio-economic, and religious practices are traced. All these have bearing on Part II so that some of the analyses offered there may not appear to be based merely on Harappan material.

The supreme ruler of this empire was Varuṇa; Rudra was the commander-in-chief of the army and Sūrya, the chief of the intelligence department and so on. Indra paralysed this system through bribery, through untimely floods creating havoc in the unprepared population and through the generous use of fire to evict people from their houses. It has been already seen how Indra invites Varuṇa to be the joint ruler of his kingdom. The invitation was accepted by Varuṇa as is reflected in his words in ṚV IV.42.1 where he reminisces after resuming the royal power. The function of each member of the so-called pantheon is pointed out below. But why do the designations of the functionaries bear resemblance to forces in nature which in fact lent itself most easily to mythopoeism? One of the reasons for this appears to be the concept of *ṛta*, i.e. the cosmic and moral order which was the foundation on which stood the super-structure of the government. The universe was looked upon as an order which is never-ending. The various constituents of this order i.e. the natural forces were looked upon as the functionaries of the universal state at the centre of which was the great god, Asura. Social life of man on this earth reflected this cosmic order and therefore, the functionaries of the Asura government were thought as the terrestrial representatives of the cosmic phenomena. This identity between the functionary and phenomenon has readily lent itself to later mythopoeism.

Even otherwise, when the problem is approached from a different angle, the reasons for this become apparent. It is but natural that man should observe the regularity with which sun rises and sets, how it regulates the activities of man on earth, how all the other natural forces are geared to this one phenomenon. Thus the various aspects of sun like heat, light, his capacity to see everything equally and with equanimity, the dawn, its beauty and splendour and the various stages beginning with the rise of the ball of light on the horizon with all its splendour to its disappearance in the west when everything is submerged into an all-enveloping darkness, must have created wonder and awe in the mind of man. The regularity of the natural forces with the sun as the central figure must have also struck him. Out of this was born the concept of the solar deity which became Asura. The various phases of the sun from dawn to dusk were seen as the various aspects of this sun-god. As man's life was regulated by the rising and setting of the sun, he tried to create an administrative system in compatibility with the cosmic system to the extent of combining designations and functions of the upholders of order on the human plane with that of the natural phenomena.

Another possible reason is the ancient custom of transforming a nature god into a city-god. This custom was widely spread over ancient Sumer and Assyria. In this particular case Ashur, the sun-god was originally a nature god which was transformed into a city-god in Assur. But apparently the concept of Ashur had a certain flexibility which

permitted a new land to become a home for the people and a sanctum for the god. It is also likely, as reflected in naming the people after god, that it was a people's god and not the god of a place. This may signify a certain stage in the development of a people where the change of station did not affect the sanctity of the god. Their beliefs had grown out of that primitive state. In case some sanctity was attached to a particular place, then it is likely that they might have devised certain rites to confer the same sanctity on a new land. This mobility signifies development in the concept of god which bestowed freedom of movement without causing loss of sanctity of the godhood, probably accompanying a certain amount of technological development and urbanization which presuppose less dependence on the natural phenomena and consequently, better understanding of certain natural happenings like rain. For this, man is completely dependent on nature. But the creation of a perennial source of water supply through technological development may lead to a certain amount of freedom from dependence on rain and an added confidence in man's ability to master nature which has been his endeavour. In fact, the history of civilization may be summed up as man's endeavour to conquer nature. This state also presupposes observation and utilization of the cyclic pattern of natural events and also as indicated above, an effort to overcome nature for the production of a steady food supply. The direct result of the nature god becoming a city god is that the other natural forces which are looked upon as forming the cosmic order are represented by the functionaries who work for the creation and maintenance of the order in the human kingdom. Thus *ṛta* which is the cosmic order becomes the moral order in human context and is created by the functionaries of the government. The linking up of the cosmic and moral orders brings by association the element of inevitability of the former into the latter. One may trace back the later belief in the inevitability of moral law to this source. It is, in short, like the *cakra*, the wheel which may also be the symbol of sun with its rays going in different directions which once set in motion turns round. The wheel of law, *dharmacakra*, was set in motion by the Buddha, and it is from life-*cycle* that one seeks to be released. All these appear to be the developments of the idea of *ṛta*, the cosmic and moral order with its inevitability and with the sun as its centre, and governing force.

There was an attempt to interweave in the socio-political organization set up by the Asuras, the concept of *ṛta*, the cosmic and moral order. First of all, the functionaries of the earthly government were thought to represent the divine forces and to that extent they were the various phenomena. They had as if come from the heaven to maintain the order. The social order maintained by them was supposed to generate moral order through social justice. The correct observance of the moral order was ultimately linked up with the victory over the evil with which the chief god was supposed to be fighting. In order to keep the evil which had entered

the creation of the god, in other words, this world, under strict control, they were always watchful and just, and strictly enforced the moral order. Every individual was made to observe the rules and ordinances of the government and for transgression he had to pay heavily. In short, they were the representatives of the god on this earth appointed to watch over the evil, which explains their being called Asura. The social organization was also created to restrict the play of the evil, to trap it in order to destroy it finally. Thus it might be said that the goal of this social organization, looked at in the above light, may have been social justice to all and exploitation of none.

This might have formed the starting point of the later preoccupation of the philosophers with macrocosm and microcosm.

With a few exceptions, the concept of each deity in the Vedic pantheon as described by Macdonell in his Vedic Mythology, has two aspects: 1. anthropomorphic and 2. representing natural phenomenon. Practically every concept harbours contradictions within itself and has presented many difficulties in its coherent understanding.

2. Ṛta

Ṛta occurs innumerable times in ṚV and the shades of meaning which are reflected in its usage are classified in no less than twenty-three headings by Grassmann.[1] Here the term in its senses of cosmic and moral order in human life is mainly discussed.

The beginning of cosmic order is described in ṚV III.54.3-10:

3. O rodasi (heaven and earth), your law shall be the truth! Enter in for our great well-being! This salutation (is meant) to the heaven, the earth, (O) Agni. I wait with a nourishment, I pray for reward.
4. Because even the earlier prophets have found (hearing), O you rodasi, true to law. Even the lords, have blessed you in the battle, in the duel, O earth, finding (hearing by you).
5. Who knows it certain, who can proclaim here which way goes to the gods? Visible are their nethermost seats—which way leads to their farthest concealed rule?
6. The seer has perceived them separately (?) with his lordly eye, who swell in the womb (i.e. middle point) of the law. At isolated places, they have prepared their seat just like the bird and have nevertheless been unanimous in the same spirit.
7. In the same way (and yet), isolated the two far-ending stand always attentive on the firm basis. Indeed the youthful sisters bear pairwise (male and female) names.
8. These two comprehend all creatures in themselves. They bear the great

gods and do not fall into vacillations. The one rules over everything which moves and which is firm, which goes and which flies, that of a different nature (rules over) variously born.
9. From afar I know the ancient one that is our lineage from the great father, the generator to whom the gods approach in between zealously giving their consent on their wide different ways.
10. O you rodasi, I present this eulogy. The soft-hearted gods should hear it, whose tongue is Agni, the youthful sovereigns Mitra, Varuṇa, Ādityas, the seers knowing the far and wide.

These verses from III.54 are to be treated on the same level as III.38 and X.177, as presenting the cosmogonic concept, probably in the pre-Aryan tradition. *Ṛta* is defined in v. 3 as the law of heaven and earth, which are also referred to in III.38.3. This law is the truth (*satyam*). The earlier prophets, referred to in v. 4, have also observed this *ṛta* functioning. However, the way to the farthest seat of this law and the place of the origin of this rule is unknown. After anointing the two *rodasi* the seers left their tracks behind which are referred to in III.38.3. Here too the seer perceives the two *rodasi* in the middle point of the law (*ṛta*), the cosmic order. They are different but are inspired by the same spirit. They stand apart, isolated from each other but are always attentive and firm. The two together form a pair. In v. 8 the cosmic law unvacillating and firm is once again referred. V. 9 refers to the great father by whom probably is meant sun and Asura, from whom all the creation is said to be born (ṚV III.38.4,5).

The concept of *ṛta* is the logical outcome of the concept of *rodasi*, that is the heaven and earth. *Ṛta* was the order which governed the original unitary universe. During creation the latter was divided into two equal parts. *Ṛta* is also divided accordingly and applies to both the halves.

This is the cosmic law of heaven and earth, firm and unvacillating, in which are contained all the gods and living beings. It is said to conceal the well-established law (*ṛta*) of Mitra and Varuṇa in the place where "they unyoke the horses of the Sūrya. The ten hundred stand together. I saw this one of the finest of the wonders of the gods" (ṚV V.62.1). This place is the middle point in III.54.6 or that where all the spurs lead to and the ten hundred are probably the rays of the sun. In ṚV I.105.11, "The fine feathered ones sit there in the middle on the ladder to heaven."

Mitra and Varuṇa are called the emperors (*samrājau*) who rule the creatures. Varuṇa's ornament is said to be *ṛta*, cosmic and moral order. They have together attained the status of Asura. In X.92.4 the network of the cosmic law (*ṛtasya praśiti*) is mentioned in which are brought together the heaven, the wide space, the worship, the great Aramati, Indra, Mitra and Varuṇa, Bhaga and Savitṛ, Rudra and others. Thus the cosmic law which kept the heaven and earth fixed and firm was reflected in the

system of Mitra and Varuṇa, Bhaga and Savitṛ, Rudra and the rivers, winds.

Just as the sun is the governing principle of the world, the cosmic law, in the form of Asura, the sun god, in the same way Mitra and Varuṇa are the upholders of *ṛta* in the human world. The parallelism is suggested by the reference to the chariot which they are said to ride in ṚV V.63.1 and the chariot of the sun in v. 7. Agni is the guiding animal of *ṛta* as he represents the sun on the earth. As has been noted already, he calls Asura father in X.124.3, Asura the sun-god. The Asuras may have worshipped Agni as the symbol of sun on earth, for it supplies the two essential things for human existence which the sun does, viz. heat and light. As such Agni worship might be one of the most ancient cults practised by mankind. The thin line which divides the natural phenomenon and its personification on earth and many times seems to disappear may be considered the direct outcome of the idea of *ṛta*, the cosmic and moral order. The natural phenomena and the functionaries representing them on the earth were identical and were treated as such by the poets themselves.

The beginning of an important concept, later designated as the ultimate reality, seems to have been vaguely mentioned here in v. 5. The gods are supposed to be maintaining the cosmic order. The poet asks if the way to the gods, and in other words to the cosmic order, can be proclaimed by anybody. The nethermost seats of the gods are visible. But the ultimate limit of their rule is not known. In ṚV IX.64.22, the concept of the matrix of *ṛta* (*ṛtasya yonim āsadam*) is referred to. This matrix of the cosmic order, and of the moral order is what later philosophers call the ultimate reality. When man thinks of ultimate reality, what he really wants to know is the source of the universe. While the universe seems to be based on the inviolable and immortal laws, man's own life is short and plagued by birth, suffering, decay and death. He longs for something like that source of which the cosmic order, apparently immortal and inviolable, is the product. He wishes to be himself immortal like it.

This is the beginning of the problem of immortality and in fact, all philosophy, man's search for immortality, and his endeavour to understand it. And has man found it? He has found it within himself which he calls the seat of the creative power of Asura in the creation or the Gandharva or the Yakṣa and so on. In the abstract form it is the Nibbāṇa or the Enlightenment, Emancipation from the cycle of life and death. The Buddha attained it through meditation. His physical self did not become immortal but he attained a psychic equilibrium where he was not affected by the pleasures and pains of life. Probably this is the maximum that man has achieved in this respect so far. In more recent times, Shri Aurobindo in his philosophy has envisaged the transformation of matter.

A seal found at Mohenjo-daro which is generally described as the Yogi-seal depicts a three-headed god in the cross-legged posture. This does not however testify the knowledge of the meditative practices, by virtue of the sitting posture. However, as has been seen above, the longing for immortality can already be noticed in the cosmogonic hymns associated with Asura and Gandharva. The immortal creative power was supposed to be manifesting itself in speech and hence the harmony in body, speech, and mind is said to be conducive to the experience of Ultimate Reality.

The following analysis is mainly based on the sketches given by Macdonell in his Vedic Mythology and citations unless otherwise mentioned are from Vedic Mythology. The characteristic features as described by him of the so-called godheads have been taken up and it is shown how the functions of each are implicit in them. It may incidentally be noted that even if Ṛgveda is treated as mythology, it is obvious that it does not deal with eternal problems faced by man. The hymns addressed to Indra, Viṣṇu and Agni praise them for the destruction of the enemies and for obtaining space for the Aryans and the tone of hymns praising the other gods is completely different—they are praised for the maintenance of moral order, for some stray miracles, for gifts, for helping people in need and so on. Of course, this will naturally raise a problem about the content and purpose of the hymns as also about the authors. Were they composed by the Aryans or they already existed, though in the language of the Asuras and were later translated into Sanskrit? All this falls outside the scope of this work. It is by itself a rich field for a Vedologist.

Here too, as we shall see, the criterion for the details seems to be whether the functionary has been useful to the devas in their victory or not. The assistance rendered by him is mentioned and he is praised or blamed as the case may be.

3. Varuṇa

It has been noted by the Vedic scholars that in the Vedic pantheon, two gods tower above the rest—Indra as the 'warrior god of the conquering Aryans' and Varuṇa, Lord of moral order. If Indra represents the conquering Aryans, Varuṇa as his powerful equal represents the non-Aryans, the Asuras, which becomes apparent when the use of the epithet 'Asura' is examined. It is connected with Varuṇa alone or along with Mitra 'oftener than Indra and Agni; and taking account of the proportion of hymns, it may be said to be specially applicable to Varuṇa'. Mitra and Varuṇa are both called '*asurā aryā*', the asura aryas, signifying aryas who were Asuras. In VII.65, which is probably the post-victory hymn, the *asūrya* of Mitra and Varuṇa is said to be undecayed, uninjured and older and these two are called the asuras of the devas and they are aryas (*tā hi devānāmasurā tāvaryā*). This clearly reflects the period when the

memory of their being the eminent asuras was still clear in the minds of the people. It also reflects their admission into the Aryan fold. As seen already, the god Asura was a sun-god and in the case of Varuṇa, his association with Asura and sun is emphasized through two characteristics. Besides the frequent use of the epithet Asura, by Varuṇa's laws (*vratāni*) the moon is said to be shining brightly and moving at night and the stars which appear at night become invisible in day time (I.24.10). He is also said to divide the night and the day and in fact, 'Sun is usually mentioned with him and not moon or night'. This may be indicative of his relation with Asura, the (celestial) sun-god. A suggestion of association of Varuṇa with the sun-god Asura is available in his being called *māyin*, which means possessing creative power. This is chiefly applied to him among the gods (VI.48.14; VII.28.4; X.99.10; 147.5). Varuṇa and Mitra are said to be lords of order (*ṛta*) who uphold order through order (I.23.5). They cherish the moral order (I.2.8). Varuṇa is also called the guardian of moral order, as also Agni and Soma. 'Observer of order' is also connected with Varuṇa and Mitra.

Another way in which Varuṇa is associated with sun is by calling him sun-eyed. The eye with which Varuṇa observes the mankind may be Sūrya although this might also have been said metaphorically (I.50.6). But elsewhere sun is said to be the eye of both Mitra and Varuṇa (I.115.1; VI.51.1; VII.61.1; 63.1; X.37.1). In fact VII.60-63 are addressed jointly to Sūrya (i.e. sun) and Mitrāvaruṇau. Once again his association with sun is emphasized by saying that he has made the path for sun (VII.87.1). In all these instances through association and close connection between the two, i.e. sun as the natural phenomenon and Asura the solar deity on the one hand and Varuṇa the central pivot of human order on the other, has been brought out. All these associations may signify the place of Varuṇa in the human order. He may have been the counterpart of Asura, the sun-god, the centre of the cosmic order, on the human level.

Varuṇa alone or along with Mitra is often called a king (*rājā*). He is also called a universal monarch (*samrāj*), a self-dependent ruler, a term associated with Indra. But *samrāj* (emperor) is applied to Varuṇa (and Mitra) more frequently. According to Macdonell, it is connected with Varuṇa 'nearly twice as often as Indra. Considering that for every eight or ten hymns celebrating Indra, only one is dedicated to Varuṇa in the ṚV, the epithet may be considered peculiarly appropriate to Varuṇa.' As noted already, IV.42 and X.124 give clear indications that Varuṇa was the ruler of the Asura empire. Macdonell has also observed that the attribute of sovereignty (*kṣatra*) is in a predominant manner appropriate to Varuṇa, as is the term *kṣatriya* (ruler) which in four of its five occurrences is applied to Varuṇa. In VII.64.2, he is called *rājā sukṣatro varuṇo*, Varuṇa the king, the excellent sovereign. He is also called *dhṛtavrata*, upholder of laws (ordinances) alone or accompanied by Mitra. The laws or Varuṇa and

Mitra are said to be permanent (*dhruvāṇī*, V.69.4). They themselves observe the laws through the power of Asura and rule over different living creatures through moral order (V.63.7). Thus Varuṇa in Ṛgveda is the figure of a ruler who rules strictly and justly. His strictness is reflected in the *pāśas*, fetters associated with him. His wrath is aroused by sin, which is the infringement of his laws. Thus the emphasis on the ordinances laid down by Varuṇa (accompanied by Mitra) may indicate that the king was the supreme legal authority in the empire and that he was assisted by Mitra in his exercise of absolute legal power.

Varuṇa is said to be the upholder of physical and moral order. He along with Mitra is described as one whose ordinances are true. In V.72.2, Varuṇa and Mitra are said to join the people through right way.[2] Here is the answer to one of the problems which has puzzled the archaeologists. It is the maintenance of a system which induced uniform production over the vast Harappan empire. It is necessary to understand the kind of rule that induced people to work. Was it slave labour as was the case in other contemporary civilizations like Mesopotamia? Or was it the theocratic rule in which the fruits of the labour of ordinary folk were enjoyed by the clergy? It appears from the description of the order maintained by Varuṇa and Mitra that it was not under oppression and exaction that the uniformity and prosperity was attained and maintained in the Harappan empire. It was the moral order that induced people to work and fulfil their social and moral obligations. As has been seen already in the system of redistribution, it was not really the economic gain that was sought after but it was rather the obligations imposed by a particular system which were most important in return for which they enjoyed economic security. The frequent references to the rules imposed by Varuṇa and to his *pāśas*, fetters by which those who broke the rules were punished may only mean that it was a lawful society. Mitra and Varuṇa had many fetters against falsehood (VII.65.3). The term *pāśa* is only once used in connection with Agni and may therefore be considered a distinctive attribute of Varuṇa. Varuṇa, accompanied by Mitra, is said to be a dispeller, hater, and punisher of falsehood (I.152.1; VII.60.5; 66.13). Those who neglect the ordinances (lit. worship) are visited by diseases sent by Varuṇa and Mitra. However, true repentence for misdeeds is recognised and Varuṇa is gracious to the penitent. He removes the sin, which probably means that a penitent was forgiven (II.28.5; V.85.7,8). Thus the emphasis under Varuṇa's rule was on the right and lawful behaviour. If the laws laid down by the government were impinged, severe punishment was meted out. These punishments are probably referred to under the generic name of '*pāśa*'. It indicates that Varuṇa as king performed the duties of judge. *Rājadaṇḍa* an expression which came in vogue at a later stage may probably indicate that the king wielded the rod of punishment. Criminal jurisdiction came under his actual administration and in this respect he was probably assisted by Mitra. Varuṇa himself held the absolute legal and juridical powers.

This fits in with the practice even in early historical times when the king was the fountain of justice. The punishments were severe. A passage in AV IV.16.6 states explicitly that the *pāśas* of Varuṇa ensnare only those who tell lies and pass by him who speaks truth. He has sense of justice as he is gracious to the penitent and is capable of releasing people from their sins i.e. misdeeds and those of their fathers (VII.86.5) provided they sincerely repent for their misbehaviour. Although Varuṇa is preoccupied with the imposition and maintenance of law and order through justice and righteousness, he is human enough to overlook the unintentional transgressions of his rules (VII.89.5). Thus the prosperity and orderly discipline as reflected in the excavated remains was that of Varuṇa, and it was based on the strict enforcement of law, insistence on truth and meting out justice. This probably is the soundest basis that mankind has so far been able to achieve for building up lasting social institutions and human relations.

How was this achieved in such early times? What were the authentic sources of information established to ensure justice? In this respect the most important and widespread organisation set up by Varuṇa is referred to in the ṚV as the spies (*spaś*) of Varuṇa. In I.25.13, the spies are sitting round Varuṇa who wears a golden mantle, and a shining robe. The spies in VII.87.3 where the word seems to refer to the rays of sun as well as their human counterparts are said to be the upholders of moral law and are like the wise seers who know sacrifice and encourage prayers. The spies were probably the upholders of moral order as they were well acquainted with the system of reciprocity and redistribution. It was a part of their duty to gather information about the wants and demands of the people. In fact they encouraged people to articulate their needs and wants, the original significance of so-called prayers. This interpretation is the logical outcome of the concept of *ṛta*. When the functionaries of the government are thought of as gods representing the natural phenomena, the language used would naturally be religious signifying in this case mundane activities. This sacrifice and the prayer really mean the share given to the government voluntarily and the demands to be fulfilled by the government. This is yet another manner in which the government of Indus civilization encouraged production amongst its people and endeavoured to provide them with facilities for production and for the fulfilment of their needs in life. The spies are undeceived and not stationary (? *amūrāḥ*) and they are set amongst the plants (in the jungles ?). They look after the settlements (colonial ?), which fall apart, without blinking the eye (vigilantly) (VII.61.3). Thus the sphere of activity of spies was almost all embracing. They not only watched the activities of the people from but also helped to maintain the hold over the expanding empire. Any efforts by the areas situated far from the central hub of government activity to break free from the Asura empire were put a timely end to by the government. The intelligence activity in such areas might be assumed to be intense and alert in

order that the king remained informed about the happenings, ensuring quick action in times of need.

The earlier reference in Chapter IX.1 to Tai.Br. II.4.6.7-8 in connection with the *armakas* to the spies may be recalled. There was not present a single spy except agni Vaiśvānara. The absence of the spies is mentioned as an abnormal phenomenon. As none of them were present agni Vaiśvānara could do what was expected of him. Obviously the spies referred to in the Tai.Br. passage are those of Varuṇa, who see with thousand eyes (AV IV.16.4). In fact, if any of them had been present, it would not have been possible to set fire to the houses (which are mentioned in the next passage) and evict the occupants. The observation of the excavators of Mohenjo-daro about the rarity of fires in the earlier periods might also be recalled. It may be said that the activities of the spies were all-pervading, that there was no question of fires breaking through negligence or carelessness and in fact as the passage points out, the houses could be set on fire only because no spies were present. What had happened to the spies? Where did they disappear? Had the disappearance of the spies something to do with the breakdown of the civil authority on account of the untimely floods?

The close network of intelligence officers was spread far and wide amongst the people. In fact, the tradition recorded in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra also gives great importance to this system. The types and number of spies prescribed by Kauṭilya, if followed literally, would mean that not a single happening of any significance in the kingdom could ever remain unreported to the king. Kauṭilya was probably recording a tradition of considerable antiquity and of non-Aryan origin. First, the name Kauṭilya is usually interpreted to mean crucked, crafty, because of its derivation from Kuṭila. The latter term is recorded in the lexicons as one of the names of the river Sarasvatī and also there was a script called Kuṭila, besides a host of other things. Probably Kauṭilya means a native of the country surrounding the river Kuṭilā. Kuṭilanīti may be the political policies or wisdom current amongst the people inhabiting this area. Secondly, at the commencement of the work, he pays homage to Śukra and Bṛhaspatī. Śukra is another name of Uśanas Kāvya, both being synonymous. As has been already seen Uśanas was appointed in-charge by the Asuras. Amongst the topics discussed is also the construction of fortresses, creation, organisation and use of spies in times of peace and war, organization of government, assignment of functions to officials, maintenance of weights and measures, military strategy and so on. Some of these aspects are amply testified in the excavated remains of the Indus civilization.

Varuṇa and Mitra in VII.64.2 are called the Lords of stream (*sindhupatī*), the kings, protectors of the moral order. In VIII.24.27, Indra is complimented for having saved those (*aryas*) from want, from destitution

and for having turned away the weapon from the *arya* in the land of the seven streams (*saptasindhuṣu*) of the Dāśas. It is not quite clear whether *sindhu* should be treated as the name of a particular stream as is done in the later times or it should be translated as streams as is done by Geldner. At least there are two instances already recorded by Grassmann in his Wörterbuch (Col. 1519) where the term *sindhu* is used as a proper name. In both the cases (V.53.9, X.64.9) the name occurs along with the names of other rivers. These cases establish the acquaintance of the Ṛgvedic poets with this usage and it may be possible that whenever the term *sindhu* occurs, it refers to the joint stream of the seven rivers. It seems probable that Varuṇa and Mitra when they were called *sindhupatī*, they were really being called the lords of the region through which the river flew or of the river itself. To control access to the river, they would have control over a large territory, as the Sindhu along with the five other streams forms an axis through the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent. This sovereignty over the river and the surrounding region might find a metaphorical expression in the words: He (Varuṇa) caused the rivers to flow; they stream unceasingly according to his ordinances (II.28.4). There is a hint of what might be interpreted as a dam on the Sindhu in V.85.6 which is one of the few hymns addressed to Varuṇa alone. It is said that 'to this great creation ((*māyā*) of the wisest of gods (i.e. Varuṇa) nobody dared to attack; thus the glittering stream, when it gushes forth, it does not fill the sea but it sprinkles (water) on the earthen banks (*avanayaḥ*)'. The great (creative) power that is involved in not allowing the waters of the stream to rush to the sea and instead, make them sprinkle the banks seems to suggest some mechanism of the kind of dam. Secondly, the dammed waters may have been diverted through irrigation channels to water the agricultural land on both banks of the river in the alluvial deposits brought along with the flood. This same dam is probably referred again metaphorically as the gullet of Varuṇa in VIII.69.12 where it is said: 'O Varuṇa, you are the excellent god, you in whose gullet the seven streams (*sindhavaḥ*) flow like the water in hollow reed.' The association of Varuṇa with the control of water, in its use for irrigation does not need to be clarified further. The idea of diverting the water through channels is clearly stated in the last part of the verse.

The tribute paid to Varuṇa and Mitra in ṚV V.63 for bringing rain may be explained as a tribute to the natural phenomenon of the sun for controlling the forces in nature.

Thus sufficient evidence is forthcoming from the Ṛgveda to say that Varuṇa was the king of the land of seven rivers including the Sindhu.

There are no great conquests associated with Varuṇa as with Indra, which itself is significant. His physical appearance is not discussed in details, though whatever is known is realistic. He moves his arms, walks, drives,

sits, eats and drinks—all perfectly human actions. In ŚB XIII.3.6.5 Varuṇa is represented as a fair, bald, yellow-eyed old man. In Ṛgveda (VII.88.2.) his face is linked to that of agni, probably reflecting his majestic and resplendent personality. In I.25.10,11, Varuṇa with excellent intelligence is said to be sitting in his mansion observing all varied wonderful deeds done and those to be done. He and Mitra are described as sitting in a golden seat (*hiraṇyayaṃ yonim* V.67.2). Their abode is described as excellent abode 'firm and having thousand columns (II.41.4) and thousand doors' (VII.88.5). It is a pity that it is not possible to know the architectural details of the buildings situated on the citadel of Harappa. The use of wooden rectangular columns with stone capitals is testified at Mohenjo-daro.[3] The palace at Mundigak IV which shows signs of contact with Harappan civilization had a colonnade of pilasters. Varuṇa is said to wear a golden mantle and put on a shining robe. The glistening garments may be compared with the golden garments of later Assyrian period[4] in which different kinds of rosettes, cheques, borders, etc. are woven in or embroidered on the cloth with golden thread. The practice is still current in India and the golden and silver thread is known as *jari*.

As is told in ṚV IV.42, Varuṇa accepted Indra's offer to be the co-ruler of the kingdom won by Indra. He stayed behind probably incurring the wrath of those Asuras who had fled from the Indus valley to Iran where they cherished the memories of the old home and nursed the all-consuming hatred for the Aryans. This may be the cause of the absence of Varuṇa from the pantheon of Avesta.[4a] Exactly opposite may be the case with Mitra, considering the comparative scarcity of hymns dedicated to Mitra in Ṛgveda. Mithra is an important godhood only next to Ahura-Mazda in Avesta. Just as spies are associated with Varuṇa (and Mitra) in Ṛgveda so also they are associated with Mithra in Avesta.

It is likely that the name Varuṇa is a sanskritized form of a Semitic name and its original form may have the basis of its spelling found in the Mitannian treatise viz. uru-an-na, heavenly protector.

4. Mitra

Only one hymn (III.59) of Ṛgveda is exclusively dedicated to Mitra, otherwise he is addressed in the company of Varuṇa. The importance of the position occupied by him can hardly be disputed. Because in many hymns they are bracketed together. The rarity of hymns addressed to him alone coupled with the high position he enjoys in Avesta may indicate that he was one of the Asura-officials who probably chose to leave the Indus valley to lead those subjects of Varuṇa who had fled in times of trouble. In the Avesta he is next to Ahura-Mazda the equivalent of God Asura in Ṛgveda. Probably his function and position in Iran might be of help to understand his functions in India. The peculiar function of Mithra

in Avesta is stated thus: In the second stanza of X.7 the god and the 'promise' or compact over whose fulfilment he watches are almost identified, for Zarathushtra is thus addressed by Ahura-Mazda, 'Break not the contract (*mithrem*) whether thou make it with the faithless or with the righteous fellow-believer for Mithra stands for both, for the faithless as for the righteous. It is this guardianship of truth and good faith that gives Mithra his special character.'[5]

Probably the close association of Mitra and Varuṇa may be traced to their representing the *rodasi*, the two halves of sky and earth. Varuṇa in general represents sun and therefore probably the sky. Mitra has to be associated with earth, which will explain his watch over the agricultural activities (ṚV III.59.1).

The Ṛgvedic counterpart of Avestan Mithra so devoid of individuality seems to embody the same trait as the latter described above. Mitra in its later sense of friend, companion, associate may be interpreted as a compact (or promise) between two people with mutual goodwill and affection. Probably the later meaning of friend represents a stage of crystallization. However, it is possible to envisage an earlier stage where the term was used in a general sense. This may be supported by two instances found in the Ṛgveda itself. First is found in III.59.1 the hymn addressed to Mitra alone. *Mitro janān yāıayati bruvāṇo*, speaking, Mitra joins the people (or brings them together, unites them). This clearly speaks of his function which is further emphasized in v. 5. Though the evidence is far too meagre to draw definite conclusions, it may be accepted as indicating especially considering the overall scarcity of the data. It seems probable that Mitra who is being given priority, (in the hymn) was probably the exchequer general of (business) contracts made in his presence by word of mouth. He might have enforced rules of contract referred to in v. 2b as *yasta āditya śikṣati vratena*, 'Oh āditya, who serves you according to a rule', and by which all parties of the contract were made to perform their respective moral and other obligations. If this meaning is not accepted then the other meaning viz. friend or association really does not fit in with the context. Further in the Namucī-episode which has been discussed in detail earlier, after Namucī's head is severed from the body, it rolls on the ground repeating *mitradrugh*, *mitradrugh*, which seems to mean breaker of compact, of promise. Nowhere in the whole of Namucī-Indra episode can they be called friends. If at all they came near it was because of the compact that Indra had made with Namucī, that he (i.e. Indra) will not kill him, by day or by night, by dry or by wet. Ultimately when Namucī dies he blames Indra for breaking this compact and proving treacherous. He had broken the good faith and trust placed in him through the compact. Thus it seems that even in Ṛgveda, the meaning of Mitra did not differ much from that in Avesta. In Avesta too *mitradruj* means promise-breaker. It may be said that besides assisting Varuṇa in dispens-

ing his royal duties, Mitra also served as the exchequer general of contracts and urged people to keep their promises. A procedure in which all business contracts were legalised by making an oral promise by the representatives of the two parties in the presence of the representatives of Mitra, who are not mentioned in Ṛgveda, in the towns and villages according to their needs one or more may be envisaged. The oral nature of the promises and the compacts is probably referred to in the term *bruvāṇo*. This may incidentally explain the scarcity of written commercial or business records found in the Indus excavations.

Aryaman is also called Asura in ṚV V.42.1. But, on account of lack of individual characteristics it is difficult to say much about his special function except that he might have been an assistant of Varuṇa and Mitra, especially of the latter. He might have performed the same function as the *saṁnidhātṛ* of the Kauṭilyan system.

5. Rudra

Just as Varuṇa was the upholder of moral law and is never described as the companion of Indra in his adventures, so also Rudra, though equipped with the fierce weapons and himself probably fiercer than them, is never the partner of Indra in his armed conflicts. Neither are there any other miracles associated with him. Whereas his so-called sons, the Maruts, have aided Indra in his battle with and ultimate destruction of Vṛtra, his most important achievement.

Rudra is identified with Agni like so many other deities in ṚV. However, this identification in his case continues in the later Vedic literature. This along with his name Kalmalikin, flaming, burning and the predominant trait of being fearfully vehement (*tveṣa*), which also signifies brilliance, glittering, point to his being the embodiment of the heat of the sun which in its absence is also supplied by fire, brilliant and flaming.

Though only three complete hymns (II.33, III.46, I.114) are addressed to Rudra, along with 75 other references it seems that he might have been an important functionary of the Asura empire. The survey of the qualities associated with Rudra suggests that the Rudra may probably have been the general of the Asura-army though at no place in Ṛgveda is he referred to as such, the title being given exclusively to Indra. In the Ṛgvedic context of the conflict between the Aryas and Asuras this does not need further comments.

Looking at the evidence at our disposal, the first point to be noted is that he is called Asura. In ṚV II.1.6, agni is identified with Rudra, who is the Asura of great *div*. In I,122,1, the Maruts are called the *vīras* (brave

men) of the Asura of *div* viz. Rudra, who are again referred as the sons of Rudra, the wise Asura of *div* in VIII.20.17. It is interesting to note the phrase *divo asurāya* in V.41.3 where Aśvins are being praised for setting before the Asura of Heaven demanded offerings which is interpreted by Geldner to mean Asura [Ruler] of heaven viz. Rudra. In II.33.9, *asurya* is said to be one of his endowments. His being an asura, and especially the Asura of *div* is thus emphasized. He is said to attend to the sovereignty of *div* in VII.46.2.

As has been already said above, Rudra has never been the companion of Indra in his wars with the Asuras, especially surprising when the weapons of offence are associated with him. His usual weapons seem to be bows and arrows (II.33.10,11; V.42.11; X.125.6) which are described as strong and swift. In VII.46.3 his darts (*didyut*) are referred to which when sent from *div* traverse the earth. In this respect the epithet *vajrabāhu* seems to be referring to his arms rather than to his being armed with thunderbolt. He is invoked in the company of the other archers and Kṛśānu and in AV, he is called archer (I.28.1, VI.93.1; XV.5.1-7). Later Vedic literature often refers to his bow, arrow, weapon, bolt etc. Along with his weapons, his fierce and destructive nature is further emphasized in the Ṛgveda. He is called strongest of the strong (II.33.3), unassailable (VII.46.1), unsurpassed in might (II.33.10), rapid and swift. He is the rudy boar of heaven (*divaḥ*, I.114.5). He is called *vīra*, warrior in the same hymn and in II.33 several times. He is young (II.33.1) and unaging (VI.49.10). In ṚV, vehemence (*tveṣa*) is frequently attributed to Rudra, for 'the hymns addressed to him chiefly express fear of the terrible shafts and deprecation of his wrath. He is implored not to slay in his anger the worshippers or their relatives (I.114.7,8)'. He is implored not to kill their horses and cattle and to avert his bolt and malevolence from his worshippers. Instead he could use them on others. In general, the worshippers constantly wish to be spared of his disfavour and the harm that would come to them through it. Along with vehemence, his beneficence is also described in II.33.7, VI.49.10. He is also intelligent, and wise besides being bountiful which is referred to several times (I.114.3, etc). He is easily invoked and is auspicious. Thus, in spite of his being vehement, which may be an asset in the battle-field, he has also some other good qualities.

Besides several references to the Maruts who are called his sons as well as the Rudras (pl.) and the Rudriyas, the *senā* or troops of Rudra are referred to in II.33.11. But as has been already noted he is nowhere called *senāni*, the leader of the army.

There seems to be a definite pattern in the characterization of Rudra. First comes the scarcity of hymns to him whereas a large number (i.e. 33) are addressed to the Maruts who are just sons or at best his followers. Secondly, the constant vehemence or malevolence also seems to be of

suspicious nature especially when he is said to be auspicious, intelligent and wise. Thirdly, in spite of weapons and malevolence which is described as if it is ingrained in his nature, no warlike exploits are described in relation to him. All this is nothing, if not paradoxical.

The assistance rendered by the Maruts to the Aryans and Indra in his individual fights for which there is ample evidence and the refusal of Rudra, their leader, to go over to the side of the Aryans might explain this. He remained a fierce fighter and the Aryans were afraid of his shafts which could kill instantaneously. As a reward of the services rendered by the Maruts, they were accepted in the Aryan fold and were glorified, whereas Rudra's glory itself was converted into malevolence, as the term *tveṣa* which is given as the explanation of the term rudra in II.33.8, which also means bright, shining. Kalmalikin another name of Rudra is explained in the Nighaṇṭu as flaming, burning. Kalmali in AV means brilliance, splendour. As has been discussed above, the term *dasyu* might also have had the same connotation and it seems logical that worshippers of a solar-deity should call themselves shining or resplendent. All through Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā his malevolence is emphasized and this aspect developed to a fuller extent. He is called a lord of shooters, of those who pierce. He is a bearer of sword. He is called *stāyūpatī*, which is glossed as *stāyuścaura eva, stāyu* is a thief. *Stāyu* is derived from √*stai*, to adorn, to put on and to steal, do anything stealthily. If *stāyu* is taken in the former sense, it may mean the adornments. In ṚV, the personal ornaments of Rudra are referred to. He is described as adorned with shining golden ornaments (II.33.9) which are also described in the next verse. Many of the epithets of Rudra, appearing in the Śatarudrīya of VS (XVI.1-66) are derogatory and doubtful. In the same passage (vv. 17 & 26), however, he is referred to as *senāni*, commander of the army.

As against the vehemence or malevolence stands out his benevolent aspect reflected in his healing powers which are mentioned with especial frequency. He is the best physician (*bhiṣaktama*) and is asked to give his remedies to the heroes (*vīrān*, II.33.4). He grants these to them and has thousands of these. He is besought to remove sickness from his worshippers' offspring (VII.46 2). In fact two epithets celebrate this aspect of Rudra-*jalāṣa*, healing and *jalāṣabheṣaja* possessing healing remedies. This indicates the importance of this aspect of Rudra as known to the Ṛgvedic poets, whereas later tradition emphasizes the destructive aspect, in which may be seen the vilification as in the case of the asuras as demons. The knowledge of medicines was probably cultivated for use during the battles because he is said to raise the warriors. Finally, an epithet of Rudra, not so much important from the point of view of his function or his nature as being a detail indicating his cultural background and regional affinities, may be noted. His hair style is described as *kaparda*

and he is called *kapardin*, a term once again of doubtful meaning. If the meaning of braided hair or long hair made into a bun is accepted then it would find well-known parallels in the Mesopotamian style and the region i.e. *div* may be described as under the cultural influence of Mesopotamia. In fact, as will be shown later, the mountainous region west of the Indus might have been known as *div*. The custom of wearing knotted hair is well illustrated in the golden helmet of Prince Mes-kalam-shar (in older publications Mes-kalam-dug) found in his grave at Ur, dated 2500 B.C. The knot of hair might have been kept in place by a string passing through the ends of fillet. The same kind of hair style can be seen on a partly hollow cast head supposed to represent Sargon of Agade, c. 2370 B.C. found at Nineveh. Similar style can be seen on a sculptured head in limestone found at Mundigak period IV. The difference between the two types is that the latter seems to be placed on the top of the head. It is reminiscent of the later practice of depicting *uṣṇiṣa* which is shown as a protuberance on the top of the heads of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

There are clear indications of the identity of Rudra as the commander of Asura army.

6. The Maruts

The Maruts are the sons or followers of Rudra. As has been noted above, they were important enough to have been addressed 33 hymns, a number eleven times larger than those addressed to Rudra. Obviously they had attained certain importance the reasons suggested for it being that the Maruts participated along with Indra in all his fights with the asuras and others. In the course of the following discussion an attempt will be made to cover the points viz. the human and asura identity of the Maruts, the natural phenomenon associated with the Maruts, the functions of the Maruts and their career as Indra's allies.

In ṚV I.64.2 the Maruts are called the males, the asuras of Rudra in a solitary reference to their asura-origin. The *māyā*, creative power is also attributed to the Maruts who live in the clouds through their good (*sú*) power and V.58, which is addressed to the host of Maruts calls them *māyin*. Elsewhere they are called the males of *div* (III.54.13) born of cosmic order. In another verse (V.59.6), the poet asks the men of *div* to come to him. Their origin in the *div* is constantly emphasized. They are called the heroes (*vīrāḥ*) of heaven in several places.[6] In X.77.2 they are called the sons of heaven. In one place[7] Sindhu is said to be their mother. As has been pointed out above, *div* may be identified with the mountainous region west of Indus valley. The Maruts are also said to have their dwelling in the mountains.[8] They are many in number but exactly how many is uncertain. In one place, it is said to be thrice sixty

and in another thrice seven (I.33.6; AV XIII.1.13). In any case they are many and are described as ranks (*reihe*), troop (*schar*), the host; their power is referred to in no less than 34 passages.[9] Probably their fraternity lies in their membership of a group rather than being born of the same parents. In fact they are described as clans (*viśa*) in at least three places.[10] The passages from ŚB cited subsequently do identify the Maruts as common people and also as the guards-men of king Marutta Avikṣita, the Ayogava king (ŚB XIII.5.4.6). The exact region over which this king ruled is not mentioned, though it may be of interest to note that the Maruts are said to have guarded the northern quarter. Etymologically Marutta and Rudra, Rudda its prakrit form may be worth looking into. It is of interest to note that Pāṇini in his gaṇapāṭha on Aṣṭādhyāyī V.3.117 cites Marut as the name of one of the martial people.

As far as their dress and garments are concerned, almost complete descriptions are available. They wear golden mantles (V.55.6). Like rich wooers they deck their bodies with golden ornaments (V.60.4). Armlets or anklets are their special ornaments. In V.54.11, which is by far their most detailed description, they are said to bear spears against their shoulders, anklets on their feet, golden ornaments on their breasts, fiery lightnings in their hands and golden helmets on their heads. They wore garlands round their necks and other ornaments. Such a detailed description is not available even in the case of Varuṇa and the reasons for bestowing this singular honour on this minor clan, whose leader or king was Rudra, an alien, are not far to seek.

They are frequently described as carrying lances (*ṛṣṭi*) which are likened to lightning (I.168.5; V.52.6,13). They are also spoken as having axes[11] which are golden (VIII.7.32). In the same verse they are also said to be carrying the *vajra*. Sometimes they are armed with bows and arrows, but this trait is not very frequent.[12]

They have certain traits common with Rudra as for example their physical vigour, impetuosity. They are fierce (*ugra* I.19.4), irascible (VII.56.8), terrible (V.56.2,3; VII.58.2), of terrible aspect (V.56.2), of fearful form (*ghoravarpasaḥ* I.19.5; 64.2) and are terrible like wild beasts, like wild bear, and like lions. They have just like Rudra their benevolent aspect also. They are playful like children or calves (I.166.2; VII.56.16; X.78.6). They are also likened to black-backed swans (VII.59.7).

The natural phenomenon associated with the Maruts is wind and thunder-storm bringing rains. The identification of the phenomenon as a part of the cosmic order and its counterpart in human world as the official is very skilfully interwoven in the case of the Maruts. As has been seen above, the Maruts come from the region of *div* which is identified with the mountainous region west of the Indus valley where the thunder-

showers are the main source of water supply. The use of the gabrbands in this area has also been noted above. It appears that the Maruts were a band of fierce fighters armed with spears and axes, sometimes also using the bows and arrows. They were especially trained to descend upon an alien army or hosts suddenly, finishing them as quickly as possible. The mutual relation between natural phenomenon of the thunder-storms and showers and the human functionary was so utilised that traits of the natural phenomenon became mixed with those of the functionary. Together they led to an incomprehensible identity which could be explained only in terms of mythology.

The first point in this connection is about the birth of the Maruts from a spotted cow. They are called sons of *pṛṣṇī*[13] and are often called *pṛṣṇīmātarah*, having pṛṣṇī for mother.[14] The spotted (*pṛṣṇī*) cow or cow is their mother (VIII.83.1) and they have the epithet *gomātaraḥ* having a cow for mother (I.85.3). This birth of the Maruts, the natural phenomenon seems to belong to a truly mythic origin. The concept of heavenly cow, the mother of the thunder-showers, seems to be similar to that of the heavenly cow in Egyptian mythology. The myth about the heavenly cow is like this: 'When the sun-god Re, the king of mankind and the gods had grown very old, he learned that upstream and in the desert man was plotting against him. Therefore, he summoned his council of gods which included the males, Shu, Geb, and Nunu, and the females, Tefnut, Nut and the Eye of Re. This was done secretly, lest man should know about it. On the advice of the gods, Re sent his Eye, in the form of the goddess Hathor, to kill mankind. When she came back rejoicing, after having accomplished part of her task, Re repented and decided to spare the rest of mankind. He ordered red beer to be poured out into the fields during the night, and then when the bloodthirsty Eye came back in the morning, she found red beer pleasant to her heart. She became intoxicated and failed to recognize men... But Re was still weary of remaining with mankind on earth. Nunu the ancient one, whose name means "the primeaval ocean" advised him to mount the back of the cow Nut. When dawn came and men began to shoot at each other with arrows the cow Nut arose with Re on her back and became the sky. Then Re expressed his "satisfaction"...'[15] This heavenly cow arose out of the primeaval ocean and her counterpart was known as Methyer, 'the great cow in the water'. These two cows of heaven and of water became identical but the one survived in the name of the other i.e. the cow in the water as 'gold', the golden one. As cow in the wilderness of the Delta, it became the tutelary deity of lovers in the 3rd mill. B.C. She was identified with Hathor, the (deified) house of Horus, and received the deceased at their burial. Just as in the case of Asura, the bull symbolises the fertility, so in Egyptian pre-history cow might have symbolised the fertility and its goddess. This may be attested by the depiction of various Egyptian female deities during the period either as cow or as a vulture or as a snake which could be said

even of the major female deities, Isis, Hathor and Nephthys—all of late origin.[16] Since the Maruts traced their birth back to a cow, it is likely that a similar concept of mother goddess was prevalent amongst the clan. In fact, the later importance to cow in Indian tradition may go back to similar mythic associations, if not a reward to the Maruts for the assistance rendered by them. The latter possibility is not too high a cost, to have been paid by the Aryans, if it is recalled that so far not a single depiction of cow has been reported from any of the Harappan sites where terracotta bull figurines are pretty common. This may be traced to the association of bull with Asura. Moreover it might have been convenient to the Aryans to adopt this practice rather than the asuric bull as an innovation. Anyway the sacredness of the cow and bull may be traced back to similar myths current amongst the Maruts.

The natural phenomenon which is embodied by the Maruts is extensively described in the Ṛgveda. They are said to be clothed in rain. 'They rise from the ocean and shed rain. Milking the unfailing well, they blow through the worlds with rain. Rain follows them. They bring water and impel rain. They obscure their brilliance with rain, they cover the cloud when they shed rain. They scatter mist when they speed with winds. They cause the heavenly pail and the streams of the mountains to pour. When they hurry on, the water flows... Desiring to give water whirling hail, violent, they rush on with thunder. They cause winds and lightnings with their might, milk heavenly gifts from the udder...'[17] The idea of heavenly cow is reflected in the last sentence (ṚV I.64.5). It is easy to perceive how the natural phenomenon and the human functionaries were closely related. As is usually said 'A line between mythology and the anthropomorphic deities cannot be easily drawn'. The two are no doubt inseparably intermingled. There may be reasons for this. First, the concept of the human functionary was based on that of the natural phenomenon. Secondly, it might have been irreligious not to have mentioned the natural phenomenon along with the functionary. Because of the divine nature attributed to the natural phenomenon and as such the description of the functionary must be accompanied by that of the other. Thirdly, the completeness of the picture, including the natural phenomenon and the functionary as its embodiment, is indicative of importance of the assistance rendered by the Maruts in the conflict with the asuras.

As has been noted above, the Maruts might have been a band of sturdy hillmen especially trained for sudden vigorous attacks in which they could rout the enemy. Probably whenever necessary they fought man to man as the weapons indicate and which were of the type called *śastras*, i.e. to be held in hands, and could not be despatched over a distance. Their departure from the asura side in order to join Indra was probably the hardest blow suffered by the asuras and as will be seen, they proved to be the greatest allies of Indra in all his exploits. The number of hymns

dedicated to them probably show awareness of the invaluable assistance rendered by them.

Another important trait of the Maruts in the ṚV is that they are several times called singers (V.52.1; 60.8; VII.35.9 etc.). They are the singers of heaven (V.57.5). They sing the praises while drinking the intoxicating Soma and they also know the previous heroic deeds of the hero (Indra ?) (I.166.7). In I.85.2, the poet praises the Maruts for 'the songs sung (by them) and generating the might in Indra (*indriyam*)'. Later in the same hymn they are said to have cleft open the mountain (of Vala) while blowing the pipe and praised for having performed heroic deeds after consuming large quantities of Soma, *made somasya raṇyāni cakrire*. The Maruts praised Indra and pressed Soma for him, when he killed Ahi Vṛtra. It seems that the Maruts were equipped with a group of poets well-versed in the art of composing and singing the praises of warriors on the battle-field in order to rouse their vehemence and fierceness, functioning like the war-cry.

They also carried weapons (V.57.6) in their chariots, which also have buckets standing in them (I.87.2). The relevance of the latter detail is not quite clear. Like Rudra the Maruts are also prayed for remedies from the Sindhu, the Asiknī, the seas and mountains and once they are associated with Rudra in the possession of pure, salutary, and beneficent remedies (II.33.13).

The Maruts are the friends and allies of Indra in all his war-like exploits and this is referred to in innumerable passages. In fact, in I.100 Indra is called Marutvān, having Maruts. They are his companions in drinking the Soma, in singing songs of war for him and in war and finally in sharing the war-booty. In ṚV III.35.9 and also in VI.17.11, they are said to share his Soma and to strengthen him. In I.101, the burden of the hymn refers to Indra as the friend of the Maruts. In I.23.8-9, the Maruts are called *indrajyeṣṭhā*, with Indra as the chief.

In Ṛgveda, there are traces of conflict between the Maruts and Indra. I.165 is probably composed from older material. The English translation of Geldner's translation may be as follows:

1. Indra: With which attire, O Maruts, (who) like old closely related have joined the common forces? With that intention, wherefrom have you come? These bulls price the battle-courage by the wish for treasures.
2. On whose fiery speech have the youngsters found the pleasure? Who has guided the Maruts to this offering? Who like the eagle fly in the air, through which high thoughts do we bring them to a stand-still?
3. Maruts: From where come you, O Indra, alone, you who is yet mighty you the lawful lord? What (purpose) brings you in this case? You wish to

make a deal with (us), as you are encountering with the concealed. Say you to us that, O guide of steeds, what you have for us?
4. Indra: The solemn words, the hymns promise me the soma-drafts. The fighting mood stirs itself, the (pressing) stone is set out for me. The praising songs, wish, expect (me). This your pair of horses drives us to them.
5. Maruts: On account of this have we travelled with self-ruling (horses) as the nearest team, our bodies decorated with the emblems of sovereignty, the antelopes yoked for this. You, Indra, have indeed prepared yourself for our independence.
6. Indra: Where was then your independence, you Maruts, as you left me alone in the battle with the dragon [ahi]? Because I the powerful, the strong, the superior one parried (at) the weapons of every enemy with my weapons.
(The speaker of the Maruts turns to the others and addresses them.)
7. Marut: Much have you done with us as the allies, with the united might, you bull. Much will we perform (yet) for that reason you most powerful Indra, if we earnestly wish you Maruts.
8. Indra: I killed Vṛtra, you Maruts with Indra-power, becoming strong through my own furious power. I have made these all shimmering waters practicable for Manu with the vajra in my hand.
9. To your acknowledged (power), O bountiful in gifts, none reaches, none is known amongst the gods, who equals you, neither one, who will be born, nor anyone born, what you intend to do, do it O strong one.
10. Indra: Even if I am alone, my strength must be enough, what I may also venture to execute everytime with thought for I am known as powerful, O you Maruts. Whatever I set in work, the Indra masters it.
11. Your praise has inspired me, the edification, which you have prepared for me, worthy of hearing, to me the Indra, the bull, the munificent, to the friend, the friends in my own person.

I.170:

1. Agastya: Now is not and tomorrow is not. Who knows that impenetrable? One must himself direct after the mind of another and purpose is annihilated.
2. Maruts: Why do you wish to destroy us, O Indra. The Maruts are your brothers. Deal with them well. Do not destroy us in fight.
3. Why do you regard us so low, Brother Agastya, you who are still our friend? We know indeed, (what) your mind is like. You do not wish to surrender us.
4. Agastya: You will put right the Vedi, you will kindle the fire first of all. Therein will we both execute to you, the immortal, memorable offering.
5. You, the treasure-lord you rule over the treasures; you are that who concludes the best friendship, O lord of friendship. Indra come to an

understanding with the Maruts and eat the offerings at the right time.

I.171:

1. With these bows I go myself to you, with fair songs, I supplicate for the grace of the mighty. Put away willingly and knowingly your anger, O Maruts. Unyoke your horses!
2. This respectful praise-song, which is sung with heart and understanding (intelligence) is made for you. You gods Maruts, come here, with understanding enjoy it, because you are the increasers of respect.
3. Glorified the Maruts shall pardon us and also the glorified well-disposed lord of gifts. Our polished (?) wooden vessels shall stand upright all day, in order to gain the victory, O Maruts.
4. Falling back before the strong one, trembling out of fear before Indra, to you, O Maruts (I say): For you were the offerings spread. These we have removed. Forgive us.
5. .....
6. Protect you, O Indra, the men before the mightier, let the Maruts apologise to you for the anger, from them, who are of good omen, made you into a victor—We might learn to know a hospitable sacrificer who gives quickly.

I.169.1,2:

1. You Indra yourself will banish these approaching (Maruts); you are that who also repulses the great enemy. You the master of Maruts, who knows (them), win their favour, because it is your dearest.
2. These Maruts have harnessed, O Indra, that they are themselves conscious in general as the claimants of thanks by the mortals: the battle-rows of Maruts run a race for the winning of the first war booty whose reward is the sun-light [lit. shining bounties].[18]

VIII.7.23-24,30-31:

23. You have passed through Vṛtra limb-wise and the lordless mountain in that you executed the mighty deed of the bull.
24. You allowed courage and circumspection of the fighting Trita, you allowed Indra to have his way in the Vṛtra-battle...
30. When will you Maruts come to the invoking speaker out of compassion for the protection-imploring?
31. What is then now? Where [do] you have friends, as you left Indra in a lurch? Who will boast of your friendship?

III.47.3-4:

3. And drink the Soma according to the times, you Soma-drinker

pressed by us, O Indra, with the gods your friends, the Maruts whom you let participate therein, and who (stood) by you. You killed the dragon, they lent to you power.
4. Those who strengthened you in the dragon-battle, you rich in gifts, in the Śambara-battle, you harnesser of steeds, those searching for the cattle, those actually cheered you as your bards, drink, Indra, with the Maruts, as retinue, the Soma.

The hymns may be analysed as follows: I.165 opens with the sarcastic tirade of Indra addressed to the Maruts. Obviously there has been a rift between Indra and the Maruts which is referred to in the first verse itself. In the last sentence a shade of contempt may be noticeable as also an overt reference to a past incident in which probably the Maruts had weighed their courage in the battle against the booty which they might win after it. In short, they displayed certain reservations in their participations in view of the material gains to be had. This probably is the main theme underlying the differences between the Indra and the Maruts. In v. 2 the sarcasm of Indra continues. He calls them the youngsters, and probably also refers to their vacillations and greediness. The Maruts, on the other hand, in v. 3 reply to this sarcasm with praise of Indra, and ask for gifts. In the next two verses, both parties indulge in reminiscing. Indra probably recalls how he got ready for the battles, with drinking Soma and listening to the war-songs describing his victories. The Maruts recall the events that led to their separation from Rudra, which is referred to as the independence contrived by Indra. In v. 6 Indra hits at them for having forgotten this fact during the fight with Vṛtra and compliments himself for having defended himself successfully. Another important point is that the weapons of the enemy are referred to in the last line which might cast doubts on the identity of Vṛtra as the serpent lying across the waters. The tone of the Maruts changes, they sound subdued. They take refuge in the future deeds which they and Indra can execute together and offer their earnest loyalties. The decisive role played by the defeat of Vṛtra in Indra's career is the subject of the next verse eight. He became Indra or rather he made himself by killing Vṛtra and releasing the waters for the Aryans. V. 9 contains praises of Indra by the Maruts, to which Indra adds his estimate of himself with the confidence given to him by the victory. Alone, he has the strength to do what he mentally conceives, and therefore he says the praises of the Maruts have inspired him!

The behaviour of the Maruts during the encounter with the Vṛtra and his men does not become clear. Some other minor references may be more useful here. As for example take the passage translated above from ṚV VIII.7.23 etc. In v. 24 the Maruts are accused once again of having allowed to prevail the courage and circumspection of Trita and allowed Indra to have his own way! In other words it may amount to saying that they did not do their best in these fights and left those concerned to take

care of themselves. And then in the end probably they joined the battle in order to complete the deed of Indra, to finish Vṛtra limb by limb. What was the motive behind the sudden indifference? The answer will be found later. This treachery with Indra was so well known that the poet asks the Maruts, even after their deification, 'when you left your friend Indra in a lurch, who will boast of your friendship?' The fact that it remained in the hymns means probably it was really not forgotten and hence not forgiven, by the Aryans. The same incident is referred to also in ṚV III.47.3-4. In v. 3 Indra is being couvertly blamed for allowing the Maruts a share in the Soma, as a reward for standing near during the Vṛtra-fight. However, they are not completely discredited, they are said to have lent him power. They were with him during the Śambara-fight also.

The narrative given in the ŚB in connection with the Marutvatīya rite described in IV.3.3.6 is relevant to the understanding of this incident: "6. Then as to why he draws the Marutvatīya cups. Now this, the midday pressing feast, is Indra's special (*niṣkevalya*) feast: thereby, he strove to smite Vṛtra, thereby he strove to vanquish him. But the Maruts, having on that account withdrawn, were standing on an Aśvattha (Ficus Religiosa). Now *Indra is the nobility*, and *the Maruts are the people*,[19] and through the people the noble becomes strong: therefore the two Ṛtu cups they say may be of Aśvattha wood; but in reality they are of *kārṣamarya* wood. 7. Indra called on them, saying, Do ye join me that with you as my force I may smite Vṛtra! 'They said, what will be our (reward) then?' He drew those two Marutvatīya cups for them. 8. They said, 'Having put aside this one (cup) for our vigour, we will join thee'. Having accordingly put it aside for their vigour, they joined him. But Indra sought to obtain it, thinking, 'They have come to me after putting aside their vigour'. 9. He said 'Do ye join me with vigour!'—Then draw a third cup for us' they said. He drew a third cup for them, with, 'Thou art taken with a support,—thee for the vigour of the Maruts!' They then joined him with vigour—and he conquered with them and smote Vṛtra with them,—for Indra is the nobility. .... 11. But he was afraid of their desertion,—'Lest they should desert me, lest they should take to some other (party)', so thinking, he by that (share in the libation) made them unwilling to desert him.... 15. Thereupon he draws the Mahendra cup. For Indra was then bound up with evil in the shape of the people, the Maruts; as one might for the sake of victory, eat from the same vessel with the people, so it was when they drew a cup for him in common with the Maruts."[20]

This passage from ŚB gives a clear idea of the motive of the Maruts in standing by during the Vṛtra-fight as well as their separation from Rudra. Just like Uśanas, they wanted wealth for themselves. This explains the remark of Indra when he says that the Maruts will praise the battle-courage after weighing the treasures, in fact that is what they did during the crucial moment of Vṛtra-fight. The technique

seems to be that of screwing out as much as possible by the sudden withdrawal of support. In order to retain them, Indra had to appease them by fulfilling their demand and that is what ŚB says in § 11 'but he was afraid of their desertion' and so he had no other way but to accept all their terms. The other possible motive behind the action of the Maruts might be the sudden feeling of guilt for deserting the Asuras and a brotherly feeling towards Vṛtra. As the ŚB indicates it was not this feeling that immobilised them. However, it is also interesting to note the comment of ŚB, that Indra was bound up with evil in the shape of people. Though the Maruts are credited with being human beings, they still symbolise evil.

The last remark in § 6 sounding like an aside seems to give an insignificant detail about the wood used for cups. The Aśvattha is apparently associated with the nobility of which the cups are said to be made. But actually they are made of Kārṣamarya wood. The name of the tree literally means the peasant men.

The other incident connected with the Maruts is once again indicative of their excessive greed for booty and insistence on getting their right share is the one frequently referred to in the Agastya-hymns. It is not clear whether the incident took place prior to Vṛtra-fight. However, there are indications it might have come as the culminating event of Vṛtra-fight.

In the ṚV, the Agastya-incident is narrated in I.169,170,171 mainly, besides other shorter references. In all these three hymns Agastya, who is son of Mitra and Varuṇa (Maitrāvāruṇi) like Vasiṣṭha, is trying to appease the Maruts by sweet words and gifts as they are displeased at their exclusion in the offerings which in this case signify the war-booty. In I.169.1 Indra seems to refer to his calling out to them for help during the Vṛtra-fight, which, Geldner thinks, refers to the ban on the Maruts from the sacrifice. He is credited with the brave deed of killing Vṛtra single-handedly. In the second verse, the Maruts are going away, they have harnessed their horses, obviously because they are displeased with the share of offerings that was allocated to them, which is stated in so many words 'the battle-rows of Maruts which run a race for the winning of the first war booty whose reward is shining bounties'. The Maruts clamoured for the booty after the battle.

In I.171, all the verses are uttered by Agastya, who is trying to appease them for the offence. V. 4 refers to the offerings (the share of booty) which were set aside for the Maruts which were removed by Agastya. He asks to be forgiven. But the Maruts probably tried to show their displeasure towards Agastya for depriving them of their share which is referred to in v. 6 where Indra is complimented for protecting the men from the mightier

and for making the Maruts apologise for their bad behaviour, towards Indra himself. I.171.1 sounds like a direct continuation of I.169.2 where the Maruts are said to have harnessed their horses to go away. In I.171.1 they are being asked te unyoke the horses. The scene in between yoking and unyoking is narrated in I.170, where the Maruts are attacked by Indra, who is about to finish them. The Maruts are begging to him pitifully to save their lives, which is also referred to in I.171.4. I.170.3 gives the true reason for the discord—Agastya had given them a smaller share in the booty than they thought was their due.

In the Brāhmaṇas several versions are available as for example TMB 21.14.5; Tai.Br. II.7.11.1; Ai.Br. V.16. They are clothed in the ritualistic language, though not differing much in content, probably because the dehumanisation of the Maruts was not done on account of the services rendered by them in various battles.

Thus their close association with Rudra on the one hand and their uneasy truce with Indra, the chief of Aryans and their ultimate deification from the status of ordinary mortals bespeak of their non-Aryan origin. Probably they originally came from a warrior community with Rudra as their overlord.

7. Sūrya

The natural phenomenon represented by this name is the all-pervading capacity of the sun's rays. From their all-pervasive nature, they are metaphorically thought of as witnesses to all that happens on earth. The earthly Sūrya also tried to see the good and bad amongst people. Sūrya, the functionary is thus the eye of Varuṇa. This all-seeing capacity is emphasized both in the natural phenomenon and also its human counterpart. The eye of sun is mentioned several times.[21] In fact, in ṚV IV.14.2,3 Sūrya (i.e. sun) is said to be intently gazing at the sky, middle space and the earth with his rays. The close association of sun with the eye and the activity of looking at may be easily understood in terms of the similarity between the pupil of the eye and the solar disc and the high position of sun is considered. Though in two or three places, sun is said to be the eye of Varuṇa, Mitra and agni, or Varuṇa alone, it is possible that through identity the terrestrial Sūrya was also being referred to. Such identity seems to be present in ṚV VII.35.8.

Sūrya (the earthly counterpart of sun) is said to be the lord of eyes in AV V.24.9. In another place, the sun is referred 'to be the one eye of created beings and to see beyond the sky, the earth and the waters'.[22] He is far-seeing (*urucakṣa*) which seems to be a trait of both the sun and the functionary. The close identity, to the extent of being almost inseparable, of Sūrya the functionary and the sun seems to be the special characteristic

of Sūrya. As has been seen in other cases the functionary is distinguished from the natural phenomenon. In the case of Sūrya, however, his personality and function seems to be largely obliterated and submerged in the natural phenomenon. The reason may probably be found in his conflict with Indra, which will be discussed subsequently.

Some of the verses which seem to refer to the functionary in a vague and equivocal manner are cited here:

I.33.8: They (i.e. the Dasyus) have caused the covering of the earth, decorating themselves with golden ornaments. Although they hastened themselves, they could not escape Indra. (He) appoints the spies through Sūrya.

VII.60.1: When you, O Sūrya, will proclaim the guiltless ones today, so you might at the day break (announce) the truth to Mitra and Varuṇa. We might be (innocent) before gods and O Aditī might be dear unto you, as poets, O Aryaman.
2. There, O Mitra and Varuṇa, Sūrya the superintendent over both rises on the earth, the watchman over all that is stationary and moving, perceiving the right and wrong amongst the mortals....
4. Your strong honey rich horses have come up. Sūrya has mounted now the bright sea, for whom the Ādityas, Mitra, Varuṇa and Aryaman, with one mind prescribe the ways.

VII.61.1: Sūrya the eye of the two gods rises charming to look at spreading (light), O Varuṇa and (Mitra) who perceives all beings, he also knows the intentions amongst the mortals.

VII.87.1: Varuṇa prescribes the ways for the sun....

IV.13.3: They (Mitra-Varuṇa) appoint him for this to divide the darkness. They who stand on the firm ground and do not put in their day's work, the seven youngest mares carry this Sūrya, the observer [*spaśa*=spy] of the entire world.

The spies are mentioned several times in ṚV chiefly in connection with Mitra and Varuṇa and once in relation to Sūrya. Once Sūrya himself is called the spy. The spies of Varuṇa were undeceivable, wise and far-seeing, just like Sūrya. In AV IV.16.4, Varuṇa's messengers are said to be descending from heaven, traverse the world; thousand eyed they look across the whole world. In ṚV VIII.47.11 the Adityas look down like spies from a height. In one place (X.123.6), the *dūta* or messenger of Varuṇa is referred to who is no doubt the sun. In I.33.8 Indra appoints the spies through Sūrya. The act of seeing and beholding as eye does is specially attributed to Sūrya. In this connection, the Kauṭilyan expression of *çāreṇa cakṣuḥ*,[23] by the spy, the eye, may be mentioned. The phrase brings

out the relation between the spy who is like the eye of the ruler. The ruler observes the happenings in his kingdom through the eyes of his spies, thus metaphorically they are his eyes and he is the observer. Thus Sūrya is called the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa. Through him (and his men who are unfortunately not mentioned anywhere and in fact this is a flaw in the characterization of Sūrya which makes his identification with the natural phenomenon very easy and obvious, eliminating the logical difficulties which would otherwise arise; the plural of Sūrya is used in ṚV I.125.6, probably suggesting the rays of the sun) Varuṇa observed the mankind (I.50.6). Together with Aryaman, Mitra and Varuṇa are called sun-eyed.[24] Varuṇa is said to be far-sighted and thousand-eyed. The association of Sūrya may imply that the relationship between Varuṇa and Sūrya was that of the ruler and the head of the intelligence department, because Sūrya acted as eye of Varuṇa. Sūrya himself is said to behold, 'all beings and the good and bad deeds of the mortals'.[25] As such Sūrya was completely aided in performing his duties by Pūṣan who as the road-builder and in general a guide of people especially travellers, cattle, etc. must have collected and fed information to the intelligence department.

Though not many details are available, the traces of conflict between Indra and Sūrya are found in ṚV. In X.43.5, it is said: Just as the player in the play chooses the highest cast, when the rich in gifts [i.e. Indra] conquered the sun [Sūrya], the all sweeping (gain). Nobody else can imitate this heroic deed of yours, neither a previous nor one now living, O rich in gifts. In the next verse, it is said: The rich in gifts came round to one clan after the other, on the lips (speech) esteeming the people, the Bull. In I.175.4, "steal you the sun [Sūrya], the wheel, O Kavi, you who can do it with your power. Drive to death for Śuṣṇa, to Kutsa, with the horses of Vāta." In another verse[26] which probably refers to the same incident, it is said: 'And where you for the distress, for the fighting Kutsa, you stole, O Indra, the sun, the wheel.'

It appears that this conflict with Sūrya which resulted in his being deprived of the wheel, probably the emblem borrowed from the sun's disc and as such the legitimate symbol of the functionary representing it, was on human plane and not on cosmic one as may be suggested by the identity between the sun and Sūrya, the functionary. This is indicated by its mention along with Kutsa, Śuṣṇa, etc. who were the human foes of Indra. The defeat of Sūrya is also referred to in ṚV X.43.5 after which he probably was forced to fight on the Aryan side as a result of which his fights with and defeat of the clans of Dāśas are mentioned in several places. In I.33.7,8, Indra is depicted as:

7. You Indra placed those crying and laughing to the war at the other end of the world. Above from heaven you threw fire on the Dasyus. That word of Soma pressing and prizing has your preference,

8. They have caused the covering of the earth, decorating themselves with golden ornaments. Although they hastened themselves, they do not escape Indra. (He) appoints his spies with sun (light).

In ṚV II.11.4 and X.148.2, the clans of the Dāsas are defeated by Sūrya. In VIII.12.9, Indra is said to have burnt Nyarṣasāna with the rays of sun.

In all these verses, Indra seems to have made use of Sūrya and his spies which are either mentioned as spies as in I.33.8 or as rays as in VIII.12.9. The Asura identity of Sūrya is reflected in his relationship with Varuṇa, Mitra etc. and his being called *asūryaḥ purohitaḥ*, which is translated by Geldner as 'the asuric one having precedence amongst the gods'. In one cryptic reference[27] Indra, after perceiving Viśvāvasu Gandharva following a particular order, is said to have followed him quickly and he discovered the disguise of Sūrya. If as is suggested by Geldner,[28] I.33.8d is treated on the same level it may probably mean that the spy was clothed with i.e. disguised as Sūrya. It can also mean that Gandharva was dressed as Sūrya, which Indra discovered, and in the latter case a spy was disguised as Sūrya. Thus Sūrya did not really become available to Indra.[29]

8. Savitṛ

Savitṛ represents different aspects of the sun, and is, therefore, related to Sūrya who represented the sun-disc with rays spreading in all directions. However, Savitṛ represents, as has been rightly pointed out by Sāyaṇa,[30] the natural phenomenon of the setting and rising sun, whereas Sūrya represents the sun after it is risen and before it approaches the setting time. In fact, it is even possible to make a clearer distinction basing it on the golden colour constantly associated with Savitṛ. That is to say, Savitṛ represents sun with the golden rays at sun-rise and sun-set. These golden rays are referred to in the golden arms,[31] golden hands,[32] golden eyes,[33] golden-tongue.[34] He has a golden-car with a golden pole[35] drawn by two radiant steeds. Mighty splendour or mighty golden splendour is attributed to Savitṛ.[36] Who can overlook the splendour of the rising and setting sun when all the air, heaven and earth, the whole world is bathed in the golden light? Even this phenomenon is referred to in the Ṛgvedic hymns.[37] Thus natural phenomenon of rising and setting sun performs the function of dividing the twentyfour hours into night and day. At sun-set creatures retire to rest and in the morning, when the sun comes on the horizon, the life begins over again. Thus the function of the official was probably to set the work-timings and see to it that they are followed in the entire empire. Besides this since he was the master of the art of dividing, he presided over the work of allotting shares in agricultural and other products which function is referred to in

the epithets *savitā bhagaḥ* and *bhagaḥ savitā*. Because the sun, after sun-rise, gradually becomes hot, he is said to impel the sun.[38] He is said to combine himself with the rays of sun or shine with them.[39]

Savitṛ is called Asura at least four times in Ṛgveda.[40] In the first *maṇḍala* he is called the Asura, giving good guidance (*sunīthaḥ*) and elsewhere he is called the gifted Asura (*asuraḥ pracetasaḥ*). As has been noted above, his arms are the most prominently mentioned limbs, besides which his hair, chin, hands are described as broad and beautiful, and his pleasant speech is also referred to. His garment is described as *piśaṅga* (red-golden).

Several hymns are addressed to Savitṛ. It is possible to form some idea of the functions performed by him as an asura-official from these hymns. If Sūrya watched the people performing good and bad deeds through the eyes of his spies during the day, it was Savitṛ who saw to it that the work of the day (or working hours in the modern parlance) came to an end at the appointed time and people took rest. He was also associated with starting the work in the morning. Probably in the Indus valley the day started with sun-rise and it came to end with sun-set. This custom continues to date in the Indian villages where the peasants start for their fields at sun-rise and return home at dusk driving their cattle. ṚV II.38 is cited here in order to give some idea of his particular functions in the evening.

3. Even he who travels with quick horses, may now unharness; even to the wanderer he ordered rest from his march. Even the gluttony of the serpent eater he has stopped. On the order of Savitṛ, night has come.
4. The weaveress has again spread the extensive (mantle); in the midst of work the artisan has put down his work. He stirs and has risen, he (Savitṛ) has divided the times. Quickly deciding, God Savitṛ has come.
5. Who belongs to the houses, (goes himself) in various residences, to every aged; the slow coming glow of the fire spreads itself out. The best portion the mother has reserved for the son, according to his desire engendered by Savitṛ.
6. Who had gone out for acquisition returns home; all wanderers wish to go homewards. Everyone leaves the work half-done and has returned as per the order of the divine Savitṛ.
7. The portion lying in water intended for them by you (the fishermen search), in water; the wild hunters dispersed themselves on the dryland. The trees are for the birds; they never fail in his order, the order of god Savitā.
8. Varuṇa goes as soon as it is possible in his waterhome, which moves here and there restlessly in the winking of the eye. Every bird went (into his nest), the cattle into the fold. According to their standing place god Savitṛ has divided the kinds.

In IV.53.3-4 his morning functions are described:

3. He has filled the heavenly and earthly spaces, the god sends forth his call to awake in his own way. Savitṛ has stretched forward the arms in order to indicate, bringing the world to rest during all nights and waking them up (again).
4. God Savitṛ gaurds the laws, inspecting the beings, not to be cheated. He has stretched the arms for the creatures of the world. He, who holds the laws upright rules over the great way.

In IV.53.6 and VII.45.1, Savitā is spoken of as sending to rest and awakening all that is living and standing firm. V.81.1,2 draw for us the picture of early morning when the priests became ready for the morning prayers. "They yoke the mind, they yoke the thoughts, the knowers of *vāc* who know the words on the high, the knower of speech he entirely alone decides the sacrifice as the time knower. Great is the praise of god Savitṛ...Savitṛ the excellent one has held now the look towards the heavenly space. After the procession of Uṣas he leads the regiment." He is said 'to circumscribe both the sides of the night' in ṚV V.81.4. Thus Savitṛ divided the time for work and for rest. He also decided the shares people would get and metaphorically the places of retirement of the creatures in the world. He gives direction to everything. The order fixed by Savitṛ was the driving force and compliance to it was expected as a matter of course.

The other function of Savitṛ which might have been assigned to him on the basis of the analogy of the rising and setting sun which seemed to divide the time into day and night is probably that of the head of the system of redistribution which as has been shown above might have been the economic basis of the Indus empire. His role as the redistributor is referred to in many places in Ṛgveda as for example, II.38.1,2:

1. This God Savitṛ has himself opened up for all times in order to give directions. The chariot traveller whose work is this because now he divides amongst gods his jewels and to the devout sacrificers share in good luck.
2. Because the god with broad hands stretches forth both the arms that everything should obey him. Even the waters place themselves under his commands. Even the wind rests on him in his course.

In v. 9 of the same hymn he is invoked for the sake of welfare and in v. 10 the invoker wishes to be his favourite 'when good comes in and wealth gathers itself'. In IV.53.1 again his gifts are referred to: 'This great desirable (gift) of the God Savitṛ, the clever Asura we wish for ourselves by means of which he in his own person gives protection to the gift-giver (sacrificer) this he the great god has kept ready for us all

nights'. In the same hymn in vv. 6, 7 the poet sings 'Bringing great welfare, awakening and bringing to rest the lord of both which is living and which stands firm. This God Savitṛ may grant to our residence his protection, which protects from difficulty in three ways. God Savitṛ has come out at his proper times. He may multiply our residences, may grant us the nourishment of good children. He may strengthen us day and night and create for us richness in children.' Savitṛ is praised for looking after the welfare of the people and for enriching them in many different ways. In IV.54.1 & 2 his role as the divider or distributor is clearly marked out:

1. Now we praise god Savitṛ, praises are to this period of the day by men, who distributes the treasures (jewels) to the men, in order that he should settle the best possessions on us.
2. Because you allot first of all the offerings to the gods, the immortality as the best part. Then do thou start, O Savitṛ, your gifts (and indicate) to men their life-time in the right sequence.

In VII.38.1-3 the same point is made more explicitly:

1. God Savitṛ has raised up his image, that golden one, that he now has placed himself. Truly Bhaga has appealed to men, of rich in treasures who distributes the jewels.
2. Rise, O Savitṛ, listen to the beginning of the right works, you golden-fingered one, your image has widened and spread. Allot to the men their human provisions (*martabhojanam*).
3. Savitṛ, the praised god, ought to have share (in the opening), to him Vasus have praised all over. May he accept our songs of praise and our respectful bows. May he protect us from impurities.

Savitṛ as the distributor, or Savitṛ who is said to be identical with Bhaga, which term literally means one who divides, dispenses in ṚV V.82.3, bestows the jewels. It seems that Savitṛ was the distributor of rewards to all and according to the status of each as for example, he distributed immortality to the gods as the best part, and then he started giving gifts to the people by showing them the right sequence. The immortality of gods seems to balance the right sequence in the life of people. The gods when they are looked at as representatives of natural phenomenon on the earth may appear to be immortal or if the human functionaries are conceived as the representatives of the natural phenomena they may appear to be immortal, as the natural phenomenon continues irrespective of the short span of human life to which man's experience is limited. The infallible nature of the natural phenomena recurring in an orderly fashion may appear to be continuous and hence immortal, death being associated with a sudden break in the continuity. The immortality of the gods referred to here was rather of this kind. The gods as functionaries representing the natural

phenomena which were the parts of the cosmic order were immortal. In this context the emphasis on the right sequence in the lives of the people becomes meaningful. Just as the cosmic order was important to bring about the annual events in nature on which depended man's existence, and especially his agriculture, the very basis of his existence in the same manner for the society to run smoothly and prosperously, it was necessary that people should follow a certain order, and this was the gift of Savitṛ simply because he brought the sun, the centre of universe and the human life on the horizon daily. So did he take it to the edge of water, bringing in darkness so that the human beings, and all the creatures in general should rest. In fact the gifts and share which is being constantly referred to in the context of Savitṛ could only be meaningful, if his position at the head of the redistributive system is seen clearly. He is prayed by the poet to give the share (*bhaga*) of the desirable gifts in I.24.3. In IV.38.2 he is actually asked to allot men their human provisions. It appears that the terms *bhaga*, share, gifts, offerings, etc. in the context of Savitṛ have a special meaning of the share in the system of redistribution. As has been pointed out above, the use of ritual language came in when the functionaries were thought of as the gods representing natural phenomena. It is possible to imagine a system of redistribution which started by giving the shares to the higher officials first and gradually went downwards. The plausible system that has been reconstructed on the basis of the archaeological remains finds corroboration here. The human provisions which are referred to above might be the shares of the non-agricultural artisan sections of population located in the urban areas and who were probably paid annually for the services rendered by them through a share in the agricultural and other produce. The term *bhojana* seems to refer to the share of eatables and may be understood as the share in the redistribution of the grain-heap. Savitṛ every year decided the proportion of share and enforced it lawfully: He was undeceivable and held up the laws. The invoker asking him to declare him sinless before gods and men even if he has sinned against good people, weak-willed or strong men, may be taken to be the common desire not to appear as a defaulter which is probably the original meaning of sin. Sin was the shirking or failure to do his social duty, to play the part his position assigned to him. The failure to do one's duty in a given situation was the grave moral offence especially in a system which was based on the concept of *ṛta*, the cosmic and moral order, where the god himself fought the spirit of destruction and evil. No wonder that almost every god as the functionary is asked to declare the invoker sinless, which essentially meant that he should be declared as fulfilling his social and economic obligation.

The immortality bestowed by Savitṛ is the best part of the offerings the gods obtain. In the light of the remarks made above, the immortality would amount to the association of a person with a particular function on cosmic and human level. In ordinary language this may mean the bestowal

of a particular office. The bestowal of immortality is like making a person an official. It would follow from this that it may have been within the scope of Savitṛ's duty to appoint certain officials. But the nature of their duty does not become clear from this single reference.

One more aspect of the functions of Savitṛ seems to be the control of water-channels. In ṚV II.38.2 it is said 'Because the god with broad hands stretches forth both the arms that everything should obey him. Even the waters place themselves under his commands. Even the wind rests on him in his course.' In III.33.6 the rivers sing 'Indra the Vajra-bearer dug us the bed, he hunted down Vṛtra who enveloped the rivers. God Savitṛ directed us with his beautiful hands on his impulse, we go broadly there'. This verse obviously states the post-victory state of affairs. But the common point in both is that Savitṛ directs the waters. Considering the function of dividing or distributing things, it is not unlikely that Savitṛ's department was also in charge of distribution of water according to the needs of the people, agricultural or otherwise. Probably the timings of allotting water were also decided by Savitṛ. Or the water was allowed to flow down the channels in the morning and was stopped in the evening.

Functionally he is also related to Pūṣan and Bhaga. Bhaga, the distributor or dispenser might have worked under Savitṛ. Whereas on account of his extensive travels which are mentioned several times as for example in ṚV II.38.1 where he is described as the chariot traveller, and the *yāmas* (travels) in V.81.5, he might have had something in common with Pūṣan, the road-builder and inspector.

There are no myths associated with Savitṛ, nor any direct conflict between Indra and Savitṛ is reported. The latter fact coupled with his designation deva with which his name is accompanied in half of its occurrences seems to indicate that probably he yielded without any conflict and stayed on in India along with others.

9. Bhaga and Aṁśa

Bhaga and Aṁśa with Savitṛ at their head formed a complete system of collection and redistribution of annual produce agricultural and otherwise. Bhaga, as the name suggests, probably looked after the redistribution of the things collected whereas Aṁśa was concerned with deciding and allotting the portions to each one who participated directly or indirectly in the process of production.

It is not very clear which natural phenomenon was associated with Bhaga. It, however, seems possible that he probably represented the rays of the sun. These started from him like the paths leading to the centre of the cosmic order. While going towards the earth these were divided. In

the moral order also, there was a twofold movement: one being from bottom to top and the other, from top to bottom. Aṁśa came under the previous order i.e. from bottom to top in which the share of the king and his functionaries was handed over to his local representative to be handed down to his immediate superior and Bhaga represented the system of redistribution of the surplus of agricultural and other produce. A part of this was probably redistributed amongst the section of population not directly engaged in agricultural production, after meeting the wants of king and his functionaries or officials. This is the reason behind the subtle differentiation in the name of the two officials: Aṁśa means share, portion and also apportioner, whereas Bhaga means dispenser or distributor, one who divides luck. The later connotation of the term Bhaga meaning bounty, good luck further supports that Bhaga looked after the collection and redistribution of the surplus.

Only one hymn (ṚV VII.41.2-6), that too not completely is addressed to Bhaga, besides several other occurrences. In one such reference (I.136.2) Bhaga is identified with sun who is imagined to be the possessor of the rays. The verse is also significant in the sense that it clarifies the concept of *ṛta*, the cosmic order: 'The wide path has become visible for the wide (light), its way is directed through the rays of the order, the eye through the rays of Bhaga. The heavenly seat of Mitra, of Aryaman and of Varuṇa (is visible), both possess high praiseworthy might commendable high power.' The sun is becoming visible on the horizon and its path is lighted by the rays of the cosmic order. This becomes visible to the eye through the rays of the sun. The hymn, largely addressed to Bhaga, may serve to give some idea of his function:

2. Bhaga, the mighty conqueror in the morning, will we call, the son of Āditi, who is the distributor, to those who hold themselves weak, and also the powerful, to those the king himself says: I should like sharing of the fortunes.
3. Bhaga, O you leader, Bhaga, O you truthful rewarder, Bhaga, accept this prayer well, as you bestow on us! Bhaga, multiply for us the cattle, horses; Bhaga, in men may we be rich.
4. And to this hour may we be fortunate and in the advance (of sun) and in the middle of day and by the rise of the sun, O rich in gifts, may we stay in the favour of gods.
5. Bhaga alone must be the bringer of fortune, you gods. Through him may we be fortunate. You, yourself Bhaga, call everyone; you, Bhaga, may we be our leader.

The function of Bhaga seems to be characterised in v. 2 where as king he asks for his share in the fortune, the bounty gathered by everybody through work. He claims his share from the strong and the weak alike. He

also bestows fortune for which he is called *vidhartā*, the distributor and *vibhaktā*, the dispenser, which is referred to in vv. 3-5.

Little is known about Aṁśa, share, portion and the apportioner. Only from two references is it possible to know the nature of his function. In ṚV II.1.4, agni is said to be like Aṁśa who accords share in the offering. In X.106.9 the Aśvins are compared with Aṁśa who 'allots (or apportions) the imposing award'. In both the cases Aṁśa is supposed to be generous in his apportioning of the shares. As has been suggested above Aṁśa, as his name indicates, probably looked after the annual distribution of the agricultural produce as well as the daily wages of non-agricultural workers in the urban areas, though there is not much evidence to support the details of the system given here. However, if the type of system outlined above was practised in the Indus civilization, then it seems that in most of the rural area the share of those agricultural workers, artisans etc. who worked or assisted in the successful operation was given to them annually and they also worked for the agricultural group or the joint family to whom the land belonged. The share of the king was handed over to the village headman, who after taking his own share, handed it to the representative of the king. Aṁśa probably decided the share every year, depending on that year's crop. The problem of the daily wages arose in the case of those workers who worked on the raw material supplied by the king and his officials like those who made weapons and armours or ornaments or were commissioned by the king etc. to make some articles specially. Those workers and artisans who worked privately might have been either engaged for a period of work by some family who hired them to make some things and they might have directly bartered their products against the things they needed. In any case, it was the function of Aṁśa to decide the proportion of things to be exchanged against each other.

10. Pūṣan

Pūṣan represents yet another aspect of the sun which has later on resulted in his being one of the names of sun. Actually it would be rather correct to say that Pūṣan represents two, rather than one, aspects of sun. He is, in fact, the sun which travels from east to west, the ability to travel being the main trait, the other being indicated by the term *āghṛṇi* 'glowing with heat'. This means that Pūṣan was the hot sun travelling from east to west, with glowing heat, between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. of the day. The functionary who was the personification or representative of this natural phenomenon in the cosmic order was the inspector and builder of roads, which corresponds with the travelling aspect of sun. The role outlined here runs contrary to the views expressed by Macdonell: 'The evidence adduced does not show clearly that Pūṣan represents a phenomenon of nature. But a large number of passages quoted at the beginning point to

his being closely connected with the sun.'[41] Although it is true that the functionary-Pūṣan is conspicuously delineated in the five hymns in the sixth *maṇḍala*, and elsewhere, the references to the natural phenomenon that he represents are not completely lacking, especially his relation to the sun. The two forms of Pūṣan are clearly referred to in ṚV VI.58.1: 'Light is your first form and your other form is worthy of sacrifice. You are just like heaven during the different day halves, because you love jugglery (*māyā*), you self-ruled one....' There seems to be yet another reason for the scarcity.

Pūṣan is called Asura Pūṣan in ṚV V.51.11 and prayed for prosperity. Little is known about his person. His foot is mentioned when he is asked to trample on the brand of the wicked. But more individualistic details are his hair and his beard. Like Rudra, he is also called *kapardin*, i.e. having his hair bound in a bun. Like Rudra, he also comes from *div*. Thus in II.40.4 his home is said to be in *div* and in X.17.6, he is said to be born on the far off paths of heaven (*div*) and earth. He goes to and returns from both the abodes knowing them well.

However, the main function of Pūṣan seems to be that of building and surveying the roads, help the travellers on the roads and locate the lost cattle and things, lead them onto the right path. In VI.53.1 he is called the *pathaspatī*, lord of paths. Later in the course of the same hymn, he is requested to search out the right path for the gaining of booty and dispersal of the enemy. He is also the supreme lord or guardian of every path (*pathaspathaḥ paripatī*).[42] The same tradition seems to have been recorded in VS XXII.20, he is called the *prapathya*, guide on the roads. This tradition continues in the Śrautasūtras too, where everyone who leaves on a journey makes an offering to Pūṣan, the roadmaker, and recites ṚV VI.53. In ṚV I.42, Pūṣan is invoked to cross the path. He is besought to remove the dangers, the wolf, the waylayer from the path. He is requested to make the path tractable. In VI.54.1,2, the functions of Pūṣan are defined more closely:

"1. Pūṣan bring us together with an expert who will lead correctly and say this is it.
2. We wish to encounter with Pūṣan who would show to the houses and say this is it."

Pūṣan not only showed people the right way or put them in touch with the experts well-versed in the topography of different areas but he also helped the people to find out the houses, or correct addresses. Although the notion of addresses might sound anachronistic in relation to the remote past that is under discussion here, the orderliness and the town-planning etc. revealed in the archaeological remains of Harappan civilization goes a long way in showing the

basically systematic way of thinking of the peoples. Therefore, it is not unlikely that even in those early times, there might have been a way of indicating houses by certain marks or numbers.

Pūṣan himself travels frequently which is probably the basic requirement for efficient dispensing of his duties as guide on roads and the road builder. In ṚV VII.58.2, he is described as "travelling with goats, protecting the cattle, inciting the house full of treasures and pious ideas, set over the entire world swinging the flexible goad, god Pūṣā travels surveying the world". He moves onward beholding the universe. He is a guardian who moves at the instigation of Savitṛ knowing and beholding all creatures. He is called the best charioteer to have driven downwards the golden wheel of the sun.[43] His chariot is described vividly, the different parts of which never fail. 'The wheel of Pūṣā never becomes injured, the box of the chariot does not fall down, nor does his wheel-circumference become wabbling.' He also uses the golden ship when he travels in the *antarikṣa*, which according to the scheme suggested below may be identified with the region through which the seven rivers flow. When he goes in these ships, he carries messages for Sūrya (ṚV VI.58.3), which may be interpreted as saying that whatever useful information he gathered concerning things other than road-building he passed it on to Sūrya as the head of the intelligence department. He, like Sūrya, the lord of eyes i.e. the spies and himself a spy over the world, sees all creatures clearly and at once[44] and this is the reason for his being called a messenger to Sūrya. In this connection, he seems to function partly as a wandering spy. The institution of wandering spies is mentioned by Kauṭilya in his Arthaśāstra and was probably the extension of Pūṣan's duty as the inspector of roads in which capacity he might have come in contact with travellers, suspicious characters and others. In general he could keep track of people's movements.

Pūṣan's another duty as knower of paths was to make hidden goods manifest and easy to find. In ṚV I.23.14, he is said to have found the king who was lost and hidden in secret. According to Macdonell and Geldner the king was probably Soma. It may also be Sūrya with whom some mystery is associated. Pūṣan is also said to have driven downwards the golden wheel of the sun (TS 3.3.9.1). It is not clear, however, whether Sūrya is elsewhere referred to as the king. The encounter of Sūrya and Indra has also been noted above. This might be a vague reference to the same incident.

Pūṣan also follows and protects cattle. As a precaution against the loss of cattle, he is asked 'to go after our cows. Pūṣan may protect our horses. Pūṣan may bring home for us rich reward.' Or as in ṚV VI.54.6 'O Pūṣan go after the cattle of the sacrificer who presses the Soma, and also ours, O you singer'. In the next verse, Pūṣan is prayed so that 'nothing will be lost. Nothing will suffer injury. Nothing will fall in a pit but come home with the uninjured ones.' His two weapons *ārā*, a stick with pointed iron

end and *aṣṭrā*, a rod with horn top seem to be both used for driving the cattle, and are peculiar to him. In ṚV VI.53.9 Pūṣan is said to lead animals with *aṣṭrā*.

An important and truly mythopoeic trait associated with Pūṣan is his giving guidance to the dead on their way to heaven. It is referred to in ṚV X.17.3-6:

3. Pūṣan shall carry you from here, the knower, to whom no cattle goes lost, the protector of the world. He delivers you to these fathers, Agni to the gods, easily discoverable.
4. May the Āyu protect you life-long, Pūṣan shall look after you on the further journey from ahead. Where the pious have their seat, where they are gone, there God Savitṛ will bring you.
5. Pūṣan knows this tract all accurately; he may lead us on the safest (way), the bestower of luck ...., whose men are all, should walk in front attentive, the knower of ways.
6. On the distant path is Pūṣan born, on the distant heaven, on the distant earth. To both loved abodes goes he here and there, the knower of ways.

Once again what comes into prominence is Pūṣan's knowledge of roads and his ability to guide and lead to the right place. The belief reflected in these verses seems to be that after death, the human beings were led by this aspect of the sun to the heaven, probably situated in the sky. The pious who performed good deeds went to the heaven and probably lived there. Although no depictions of this are found on the Harappan seals or pottery, the scenes on the pottery of cemetery H seem to bear some resemblance to them. This refers to the depictions of stars etc. which may refer to heaven and there the dead are carried by the bird, which seems to be a mythical representation of the sun-bird. Thus the people whose dead were buried in cemetery H might be the descendants of the Harappans, later called Zoroastrians. These depictions reflect some of the later practices. The Pūṣan referred to here is probably the sun-god in a truly mythopoeic context.

Probably the most significant trait of the functionary Pūṣan is his role in the Vṛtra-fight which is not noted by Macdonell. His position as the surveyor of roads does not warrant him to be the equal of Indra. The hymn ṚV VI.57 is addressed to Indra and Pūṣan. Indra and Pūṣan are compared pointing out the differences between them. In v. 4 it is said, "As Indra the most bull (like) one led the streaming great waters (on their way) then Pūṣan was nearby". Also in ṚV VI.56.2: 'And with him as the ally friend, killed he the best charioteer, the true master Indra, the enemies'. The hymn is addressed to Pūṣan. These two references leave little doubt as to Pūṣan's friendship with and assistance to Indra in his fight with the Vṛtras. When he released the waters after killing Vṛtra, Pūṣan was with

him, and with him as the ally, Indra killed the Vṛtras, as referred to in VI.57.3. In fact, the bracketing together of Indra and Pūṣan, even in a single hymn, seems to be for this, as also the eight other complete hymns. Now it may be possible to guess the reason for the scanty delineation of the natural phenomenon and that is the assistance rendered by Pūṣan, the officer of the Asura-empire to Indra in his fight against Vṛtra and his men. The prayers addressed to Pūṣan in ṚV VI.53.3,5-7, for the destruction of Paṇis become meaningful in this light. Thus here is yet another ally of Indra who helped him to destroy the Harappan empire. In fact, Indra could achieve this only because of their assistance.

11. The Aśvins

The Aśvins are the most celebrated of the so-called deities in Ṛgveda and are only next to Indra, Agni and Soma, in terms of the number of hymns (fifty entire hymns) and the recurrence of their name. Macdonell has perceived their 'distinct position among the deities of light' and their Indian appellation, but he could not establish any connection with any definite phenomenon of light. Their original nature has been a puzzle to Vedic interpreters from the earliest times. And because of this obscurity he thinks that their origin is to be sought in the pre-Vedic period.[45]

It is not quite clear why the Aśvins are connected with light. However, the natural phenomenon associated with them is the light before the early dawn when 'darkness still stands among the ruddy cows',[46] and they yoke their chariot to descend to earth and receive the offerings. At the yoking of their chariot Uṣas is born.[47] Savitṛ is once said to set their chariot in motion before the dawn,[48] and 'also the appearance of the Aśvins, the kindling of sacrificial fire, the break of dawn and sunrise seem to be spoken of as simultaneous'.[49] The Aśvins are invoked to come not only in the morning but also in the evening and other times of the day. It appears that the Aśvins represented the light before the dawn and probably ŚB V.5.4.1, where Aśvins are described as red-white in colour, points to this phenomenon. The function they performed in the Asura-empire seems to be that of the officers who tried to solve some special problems of individuals besides rescuing several others found in precarious situations. They are also well versed in medicines, probably a necessary requirement for their function as rescuers. Later mythology and even Ṛgveda knows them as divine physicians. The relation between the natural phenomenon and the function of the officer is much the same as between dark night and the twilight. After the people experience difficulties, there come the Aśvins who, like the twilight dispelling the darkness, help the people out of their difficulties after which the sun of joy shines brightly.

Though the later tradition depicts the Aśvins as twins, in Ṛgveda there is no direct reference to them as such. However, they are clearly

two, as a number of references to them are in dual, and their comparison with the pairs of limbs, birds, etc. suggests.[50] They are said to have been born separately and in different places. One of them is called a victorious prince and the other, the son of heaven.

The Aśvins are young (ṚV VII.67.10) and at the same time ancient (VI.62.5) which may refer either to the natural phenomenon or to the office they occupied which may be ancient. They are bright and lustrous, of golden brilliance,[51] references obviously to the natural phenomenon. They are beautiful and wear lotus-garlands. They possess profound wisdom. They are nowhere described as Asuras but like the Asuras, they also possess the creative powers which make them creative (*māyābhir māyinā*).[52]

The Aśvins are also called Nāsatyas and are known as Nāṅhaithya, an equivalent of Nāsatya, in the Avesta. There the term is singular and signifies the fourth arch-demon. In Bundhāhishn, this demon is said to be embodiment of discontent, and it is also identified with Taromaiti, 'presumption, disobedience, insubordination, discontent'.[53] Moreover, the Sanskrit-sounding name Aśvins is not found in Avesta. Considering the meaning of Aśvins, endowed with horses and the inconspicuous use of horses made by the Aśvins, it seems unlikely that the meaning any way refers to the horses. It is not, however, impossible that this name was given by the Aryans to them and probably had something to do with their saving Indra's life when he was taken ill after the consumption of *surā* offered by Namucī. The Sanskrit sounding name Aśvin seems to be a sort of a reward for saving Indra's life. The term Nāsatya and its Avestan equivalent Nāṅhaithya, are also interpreted as the savers which may be correct when looked at in the context of the deeds attributed to them. The Aśvins bring back to earth and thence to life the distressed whereas their Avestan counterpart is a demon who restores the beings to earth i.e. to the grave.[54] The conceptional antithesis which pervades the two traditions is met with in this case too and may be attributed to the general cause of the treachery of the Asura-officials as preserved by the later generations. The fact that the Nāṅhaithya is mentioned in Avesta and the later tradition as a demon seems to point to his existence in the Indus valley. His transformation into a demon probably speaks of the hatred of the Asuras who had fled from the Indus valley and settled down in Persia where the ancient tradition was preserved by them in the form of Avesta. One can see that there are at least two incidents which might have angered these people. Before the details are discussed, it may be noted that all the deeds which sound almost like miracles probably stand testimony to their role as saviours, and their name, irrespective of its later connotation of demon in Avesta, may have literally meant 'who creates content'.

A number of incidents illustrating their function as saviours are referred to in ṚV. Cyavana, who had grown old, was released from his

decrepit body and bestowed with youth and long life.[55] They also renewed the youth of Kali and made friends with him when he took a wife. But besides all these minor stories, the story of Bhujyū, son of Tugra, abandoned in the midst of ocean (*samudre*) or in the water-cloud, tossed about in darkness and rescued by the Aśvins is narrated frequently. They rescued him in their hundred-oared ship, which were water-tight and functioned well. Bhujyū is described as clinging to a log for support in the midst of waves. Rebha, another sage, who was stabbed and abandoned as dead in water for ten nights and nine days was also rescued by the Aśvins and revived. Vandana was also similarly rescued by raising him from a pit (RV X.39.8). They made friends with Ghoṣā who was growing old in her father's house and found a husband for her. Amongst their miracles as physicians may be counted the restoration of eyesight to Ṛjrāśva who had been blinded by his father as a punishment against killing hundred and one sheep and giving them to a she-wolf to devour. The eyesight was restored at the prayer of the she-wolf! They cured Parāvṛj of blindness and lameness (RV I.112.8). When Viṣpalā's leg had been cut off in battle like the wing of bird, the Aśvins gave her one made of *āyasī* which according to the interpretation offered above may have been of bamboo, reed or wood rather than iron. Their knowledge of the veterinary science is reflected in the incident of Śayu's cow who had turned fallow. The cow started giving milk after treatment of the Aśvins. Thus it seems that although rescuing was their special function, they also helped people to overcome their distress in different kinds of situation. They seemed to have fulfilled the functions similar to those of Aśoka's Dharma-mahāmātya, the minister for divine-law who was created to inculcate piety, to redress misfortune or wrong, to organise charitable endowments and gifts.[56] The title given to the Aśvins in RV and also preserved in later tradition viz. that of the divine physicians was an outcome of their being useful to Indra during his illness.

Their function of helping people in distress took them from place to place and in all directions. The sphere of their activity covers the three regions of *pṛthivī*, *antarikṣa* and *div*. They are asked to come from the shining *div* (RV VIII.8.7), out of *antarikṣa* (Ibid; v. 4; 9.2) and from *antarikṣa* (RV VIII.8.3). They seem to travel on the sea (VIII.26.17) and the Sindhu with golden course carries them mostly in rivers (RV VIII.26.18). They are said to speed through *antarikṣa* or ride chariot. They have friends in the *antarikṣa* (RV VIII.8.4) they pass while on their way from *div*. Once the five clans of people are referred to in a way as if they are on the same plane of existence as *antarikṣa* and *div*. 'Whatever is in *antarikṣa*, whatever in *div*, whatever in the five human clans (*pañcamānuṣam*) of heroic strength, bring that O Aśvins.'[57] They possess a ship with hundred oars (*śatāritra*) or they sail on the sea in the properly ordered house. They also visit the earth (*dīrghaprasadman* in RV VIII.9.1), which is interpreted by Geldner[58] as name of a neighbouring king or name of sun. Monier-Williams inter-

prets it as earth which is accepted here as it seems to fit in the context. They move in chariot which is frequently referred to. It is golden and ornamented (ṚV VIII.8.11,14), and moves lightly (VIII.9.8), swifter than thought (I.117.2). It is fashioned by Ṛbhus (X.39.12). Frequently their courses (*vartīs*) are mentioned which with one exception solely applied to them. *Parijman* is another term connected with the Aśvins, or their car in the sense of running or walking or driving around, being everywhere. Probably in connection with their duties, the Aśvins were constantly on their move which is indicated by these two terms. Their close association with water and especially with navigatory activities, along with the frequency with which they figure in rescue operations suggests that probably they were chiefs of the units of inspectors and rescuers, the sphere of their activity being *div* and *antarikṣa* which according to the scheme suggested below seems to be identical with the region west of Indus including parts of Iran and the region through which the seven rivers flowed respectively. As inspectors of courses of rivers and also perhaps the coastal line important for trade-operations, their duties might have also included rescue operations for which they were equipped with ships, knowledge of medicines, etc. The occasions like the one described in the episode of Bhujyū which incidentally sounds to be non-Sanskritic name, might not have been infrequent. It seems that they were well prepared for it not only with ships which were water-tight but also with other things like medicines.

How the Aśvins came to be recognised as the divine physicians may be an interesting episode by itself. Although it is not frequently referred to in the Ṛgveda, at least on one occasion it is mentioned and the Brāhmaṇa narratives furnish the details. In fact this incident was considered important enough to create a sacrifice out of it. Thus on this incident is based the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice. As the poet Sukīrti Kakṣivata sings in X.131.4 & 5:

4. You Aśvins have drunk ginned (Soma) at the Asura Namucī, you lords of beauty and also conquered Indra by your deeds.
5. Like parents to son, so the two Aśvins, you stood by Indra with your insight (literally, seeing gift) and the arts. As you drank out the ginned (Soma) with great efforts, Sarasvatī, cured you, you rich in gifts.

The story as given in the ŚB (XII.7.1.1) is as follows: 1. Indra slew Tvaṣṭṛ's son Viśvarūpa. Seeing his son slain, Tvaṣṭṛ exorcized him (Indra) and brought Soma juice suitable for witchery and withheld from Indra. Indra by force drank off his soma-juice, thereby committing a desecration of the sacrifice. He went asunder in every direction and his energy or vital power flowed away from every limb.... 10. Now at that time he (Indra) had to do with Namucī, the Asura, Namucī bethought him, 'He has been undone once for all; I will seize upon his energy, his vital power, his Soma drink, his food. By (taking) that *Surā* liquor of his, he seized upon his energy or vital power, his Ṣoma-drink, his food. He lay there dissolved. The gods

gathered around him and said, 'Verily, he was the best of us; evil has befallen him: let us heal him!' 11. They said to the two Aśvins, 'Ye are Brahman physicians: heal ye this one!' They replied, let there be a guerdon for us! Thus spake, 'That he-goat there shall be your guerdon! They said, 'so be it!'.... 12. They (the gods) said to Sarasvatī 'Verily, thou art healing medicine: heal thou this one!' She replied 'Let there be a guerdon for me!' They spake that ram there shall be thy guerdon!' She said 'so be it!'.... 14. The two Aśvins and Sarasvatī, having taken the energy or vital power, from Namucī, restored them to him (Indra) and saved him from evil. 'Truly, we have saved him from evil so as to be well-saved (*sutrāta*)', they thought, and this became the Sautrāmaṇi: and this is the saving nature of Sautrāmaṇi....[59]

Details of the manner in which the Aśvins and Sarasvatī helped him are available in ŚB XII.7.3.1-3: 1. By means of the Surā-liquor Namucī, the Asura, carried off Indra's (source of) strength, the essence of food, Soma-drink. He (Indra) hasted up to the Aśvins and Sarasvatī, crying, I have sworn to Namucī, saying, "I will slay thee neither by day nor by night, neither with staff nor with bow, neither with the palm of my hand nor with the fist, neither with the dry nor with the moist!" and yet has he taken these things from me: seek ye to bring me back these things! 2. They spake, let us have a share therein, and we will bring them back to thee:—'These things (shall be) in common to us', he said, 'bring them back, then!' 3. The Aśvins and Sarasvatī then poured out foam of water to serve as a thunderbolt, saying 'It is neither dry nor moist'; and when the night was clearing up and the sun had not yet risen, Indra, thinking, 'It is neither by day nor by night', therewith struck off the head of Namucī, the Asura.[60]

It is quite obvious that the Aśvins not only cured the bad effects of Surā consumed by Indra but they also showed him the way to kill Namucī without the apparent violation of the pact between the two. The means of killing and time of killing both seem to be characteristic of them. With their knowledge of poisonous substances, they located this foam which might be the *samudrapheṇa* used in Ayurveda as local anasthesia.[61] The time they suggested neither day nor night, was attributable to the natural phenomenon of the Aśvins viz. before dawn. Probably with their hint Indra became conscious of it though the ŚB attributes it solely to Indra. What is important is that Indra managed to kill his enemy and also to save his own life through the support of the Aśvins and the Sarasvatī. As a reward they came to be known in the tradition as the divine physicians.

Another important occasion on which they seem to have helped Indra is his fight with Vṛtra, though the details are not known. However,

assistance was significant enough to win them the title *Vṛtrahantama* in VIII.8.9,22.

Both these incidents will explain the wrath reflected in making them demons of discontent who restore people to the grave. This is exactly opposite of their functions reflected in the events narrated; the name, the Aśvins and the designation of the divine physicians given to them by the Aryans shows appreciation of the services rendered by them.

12. Bṛbu

Very little material is available about Bṛbu. The three verses addressed to him give partial idea of his function. He is not associated with any natural phenomenon nor are there any events in which he had participated. The three verses ṚV VI.45.31-33 which are addressed to him run as follows:

31. Highly exalted over the Paṇis stands Bṛbu as a wide thicket on the Gaṅgā.
32. Whose liberality bringing luck quickly as that of Vāyu bringing in thousands, is ready to bestow immediately.
33. All people even the high lords should know this well about us. Always poets praise Bṛbu, the greatest thousand giver, the liberal lord, the greatest thousand giver.

As v. 31 refers to his status exulted high above the Paṇis, he might have presided over the trade-activity which as has been seen above was the profession of the Paṇis of the Asura-empire. Along with this, the generous nature of Bṛbu's gifts which stands in contrast to that of the Paṇis who are generally described as stingy is also emphasized through several repetitions.

13. Vāyu

Macdonell tried to differentiate between Vāyu and Vāta, and came to the conclusion that 'each of the two names of wind Vāyu and Vāta is used to express both the physical phenomenon and its divine personification. But Vāyu is chiefly the god and Vāta the element.' As a matter of fact had Vāyu been the personification of the wind-element, it was necessary that he should have been very closely connected with it. Two different names would have been unnecessary, as noted in the cases of so many other functionaries of the Indus empire. It seems that the function of both Vāyu and Vāta was separate. The natural phenomenon associated with the functionary Vāyu is the breeze which blows at dawn, mythopoeically associated with the yoking of the horses of the sun's chariot. This mythopoeic trait in the cosmic order is exploited in the assignment

of function to his counterpart in the moral order. The functionary Vāyu seems to be the horse-breeder, or the head of the royal stables. ṚV I.134.3,4 gives some idea of the natural phenomenon Vāyu:

3. Vāyu harnesses both the reddened, Vāyu the reddish (horses), Vāyu the agile, two on the wagon that they draw the yoke, the best draught horses that they draw in the yoke. Wake the wish-fulfilling as the lover the sleeping. Brighten both the worlds, let the dawn shine, to your glory let the dawn shine.
4. For your display the pure dawn broadens in the distance her pretty garments...in her rays, the varied (garments) in the new rays. For you shall be milked the cow Sabardugha of all good things. You begat the Maruts out of the udder, out of the udder of the heavens.

V. 3 refers to the yoking of reddish horses to the wagon in order that the dawn shines. V. 4 continues with the description of the dawn and clearly refers to the natural phenomenon of the morning breeze which has given birth to the Maruts, the thunder-showers out of the udder of heavens. The term Vāyu can be derived from the causal formation of √*vī*, *vāyayati*. *Vīta* in ṚV means straight, smooth and later in Rājataraṅgiṇī as trained, quiet. Vāyu may thus mean one who straightens and hence breeds or tames. This meaning may be supported by the constant references to harnessing and yoking the horses in relation to Vāyu.

The functionary Vāyu is not described in great details. He is said to be beautiful (ṚV I.2.1) swift as thought. He is spoken of as touching the sky along with Indra which may be treated as a metaphorical expression, probably referring to his big stature or his valour. In ṚV I.23.1-3, Indra and Vāyu are referred together before the others, like Mitra, Varuṇa etc. He is said to be the son-in-law of Tvaṣṭṛ.[62]

The friendship or rather alliance of Indra and Vāyu is reflected in their being addressed jointly in about 6 hymns. Indra rides in Vāyu's car[63] which is described as having a golden seat, and touching the sky. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa narrates a story of the race ran by Indra and Vāyu to determine the receiver of the first draft of Soma. Vāyu wins the race and in ṚV he is offered the first drafts, which he drinks 'neat' (*śucīpā*)!

In ṚV, Vāyu is associated with horses and chariots running with velocity. He has a shining chariot drawn by a pair of red or ruddy steeds. In ṚV IV.48.4 to his chariot are yoked a team of 99 horses or 100 or 1000 horses. He has harnessed them through his understanding (*manoyujā*), indicating his mastery of the breeding-technique though such a prophanization of this term may be frowned upon. However, if Vāyu is considered a human being, for which there is evidence, then this may be the right sense of the term. Vāyu granted amongst other things wealth in steeds

and oxen.[64] In fact, in the Ṛgveda, there are frequent references to the teams of horses harnessed to his chariot which seems to point to a special trait associated with Vāyu. The verb *ni*+√*yu* means to bind on, fasten, in this context harnessing or fixing with harnesses, seems special to Vāyu. The nature of the friendship between Indra and Vāyu is referred to above. He was important enough to be mentioned along with Indra and he could also occupy the chariot of Indra. His importance is above all emphasized by allotting to him the first draft of soma. The secret of the importance enjoyed by Vāyu seems to lie in one single title in which he is called the charioteer of Indra, *indrasārathi* in ṚV IV.46.2; 48.2, which is spoken of in his connection alone. In those days when battles were fought from chariot, the charioteer was probably more important than the warrior himself as is illustrated in the pair of Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in the Mahābhārata war. It was not enough that the warrior was well versed in the use of weapons etc. It was necessary to have a good charioteer, who was not likely to develop cold feet during the battle. This gives special significance to the term *niyuta* in the context of Vāyu and may indicate his mastery over the reins of horses. For these services rendered by Vāyu, he was made a god in later mythology. As against this, his treachery is reflected in his being demoniac in Avesta, where Vāyu is a demon, merciless.

14. Vāta

In the case of Vāta, the natural phenomenon of stormy wind predominates the description in Ṛgveda where two complete hymns are addressed to him. Though it is extremely difficult to guess the nature of the work done by the functionary Vāta, the traces of the human functionary are noticeable in the scattered references. This lack of individuality may be reflected upon in the light of the Avestan Vāta who 'as a deified being is invoked as the holy beneficent wind' which suggests that probably Vāta preferred to leave the Indus valley and proceeded to Iran. The sphere of activity of the natural phenomenon is the air which in the case of the official representing it may be said to be *antarikṣa* i.e. the region through which the seven rivers flowed (see infra § 22). ṚV X.22.4,5 gives clear indications of the functionary who was probably someway relieved of his horses and chariot by Indra, who used them himself.

4. Uśanas: When you harness the blustering horses of Vāta god, those of the gods, O Vajra-holder, and travel on the shining (solar) way, thus praise (the horses), when you allow them to gallop headlong on the way.
5. Vāta: You have come to travel around even (on) the known white-horses of Vāta in his own person for neither the god nor a mortal is to be found as conductor.

The natural phenomenon associated with Vāta appears to be that of dust-storm which is a frequent occurrence in the northern sphere of the

Indian sub-continent. Vāta is described by Macdonell as: 'Shattering everything and thundering his din presses on; he goes along whirling the dust of the earth; he wanders in the air on his paths; ... The activity of wind is chiefly mentioned in connexion with the thunderstorm (IV.17.12; V.83.4; X.168.1,2). Blasts of wind being coincident with the appearance of lightnings and preceding the reappearance of the sun...' Probably besides being the whirlwind, the Vāta was associated with the strong morning breeze ushering in the dawn.

15. Parjanya

Parjanya, rain, is celebrated only in three hymns along with thirty other references. As a natural phenomenon, it is the rain which fructifies the seeds on the earth. The function of the officer was to ensure fertility in vegetation, human and animal levels. This capacity is also the creative power of god Asura whose creation the whole world is. However, the creative capacity of Parjanya is in a way limited to the region of earth.

The phenomenon of rain is referred to in clear cut terms: 'This same water rises and descends day by day; the rain clouds (*parjanyāḥ*) quicken the earth, the fires quicken heaven' (I.164.51). The Maruts 'even during the day cause darkness by the water-carrying, rain-cloud, when they inundate the earth' (I.38.9); 'They poured out the pail of heaven, they discharge the rain-cloud through the two worlds, the rain pervades the dry places' (V.53.6).[65]

The human representative of the natural phenomenon is not clearly delineated at all and his existence can be easily questioned. However, the fact that Parjanya is said to place the germ not only in plants but in cows, mares and women (VII.102.2) and is invoked to bestow fertility (V.83.7) implies that Parjanya controlled the generative activity in all spheres of existence. This power may be related to the generative power of the god Asura, on the basis of which the existence of Parjanya as functionary is not difficult to imagine, though the human counterpart may have functioned in a different manner. That is to say he might have supplied the right type of seeds to the farmers, given assistance in breeding the draft animals and probably also concerned himself with problems connected with fertility on human level.

16. Vṛtra

As has been discussed above in Chapter III.1, the term Vṛtra probably meant one who wards off or checks. Ahi might have been the family name, belonging to a clan later called Dānavas, sons of Dānu, who was the mother of Vṛtra. Thus Vṛtra rather seems to be the designation

of an official who along with his men, referred to as *Vṛtrāṇi*, was guarding the dam which is described as the mountain. Practically everywhere the waters are described as *tastabhyāṁsam*, banned (ṚV II.11.5), *vavrīvāṁsam*, imprisoned, captivated (ṚV III.32.6, IV.16.7, VI.20.2), *pariṣṭhā*, obstructed (ṚV IV.72.3) etc.

The non-Aryan origins of Vṛtra are reflected in his being called a Dāsa as well as Dānava, son of Dānu. The tradition of MBh makes him one of the four sons of Danāyu, Vala being one of his brothers. The waters are metaphorically called *dāsapatnirahigopā* (in ṚV I.32.11), the wives of the Dāsa protected by Ahi. This seems to refer explicitly to the function of Ahi viz. that of protecting the waters which supports the interpretation of Vṛtra suggested above.

An almost complete account of the Vṛtra-episode is given in ṚV I.32 besides innumerable fleeting references strewn all over. Translation of the hymn is cited below:

1. I shall now proclaim the heroic deeds of Indra, the first ones, which the thunderbolt wielder performed: He killed the dragon, split open the waters; he broke open the softer sides of the mountain.
2. He killed the dragon who was himself lying on the mountain. Tvaṣṭṛ had fashioned him the dashing Vajra. Flowing like the bellowing cows (to the calves) the waters rushed towards the sea swiftly.
3. Greedily like a bull, he chose Soma, in the *Trikadrukas*, he drank from the pressings. He rich in gifts grasped the missile, the thunderbolt. He killed him, the first-born of the dragon.
4. As you, O Indra, killed the first-born of the dragon and there you outwitted the cunning of the cunningest, you brought forth the sun, sky and dawn, there you have thenceforth (?) never found your master.
5. Indra killed Vṛtra, the greatest enemy, the shoulderless (?), with his thunderbolt, his great weapon. Like the tree-trunks which are felled with the axe, lies the dragon flat on the earth.
6. Because he (Vṛtra) had called forth in his drunken insolence like one unskilled in fighting, the great hero, the strongly distressing one, and the soma-draft drinking (one). He could not survive before the onslaught of his weapons. The nose-breaker (?) was slaughtered when he found in Indra his master.
7. Without hand and foot he fought against Indra. He struck him with his bolt in the neck. The cut open (bull) who wanted to grow against Indra, that Vṛtra lay there dismembered in many places.
8. On him who lay there only like a cut up reed went rising (growing) the waters of Manu. She who had surrounded Vṛtra in his greatness at her feet lay the dragon.
9. The life power of the mother of Vṛtra declined; Indra had thrown the

weapons on her. Above lay the creatress and below the son. Danu lay just like a cow with her calf.
10. In the midst of the water-courses which never stand still and never rest, his body was buried. The waters flowed over his rivities. In long darkness sank the one mastered by Indra.
11. Like the wives of Dāsa watched over by the dragon, the waters were interspersed like the cows of the Paṇis. The outflow of water which was stopped, he had opened by killing Vṛtra.
12. You transformed yourself into the hair of a horse O Indra, when he smote thee against the spike [*sṛk*, mouth-corner ?]. As the only god you conquered the cows, you conquered, O hero, the soma; you let the seven streams free so that they flow.
13. Lightning and thunder did not frighten him, neither mist nor sleet, which he stretched forth. As Indra and the dragon fought, there the munificent one remained victor for all times.
14. When you saw, O Indra, the avenger of the dragon then the fear of dead bidded your heart, as you hastened over the ninety nine streams, like the frightened eagle in the space?

The mythopoeic element intrudes as soon as the term Ahi is rendered as dragon. However, if it is treated as a family name, as it seems to be, the mythopoeic element practically disappears. The attribution of the birth of the sun, sky and dawn to Indra in v. 4 of this hymn and elsewhere in Ṛgveda appears to be the highest praise in which the poet compares Indra with the primordial god-hero who killed the primordial chaos creating earth and sky, the sun and the dawn. Originally this myth was associated with Asura as is clear from the cosmogonic hymn (ṚV IV.38). Indra by killing Vṛtra became God Asura. This may also explain Indra's getting the eponym Asura in several places in ṚV. In v. 12, though Indra is said to have 'transformed' himself, a more literal translation of *abhavaḥ* may be 'became', and which may be treated as an exaggerated expression for Indra's clinging to the back of the tail of the horse in order to avoid the thrust of Vṛtra which aimed at his head. He clung to the tail so closely that he seemed to be identified with it.

With these remarks the narrative of the Vṛtra-episode in the hymn is rendered almost completely realistic and full of human emotions, to the point of being tragic. The description of Danu bent over her son trying to revive him cannot be anything else anywhere as long as mother-child relations remain what they are. Indra, though the victor, is nonetheless afraid at the thought of the avenger.

ŚB I.6.4.1 narrates the feelings of Indra: 1. When Indra had hurled the thunderbolt at Vṛtra himself, thinking himself to be the weaker, and fearing lest he had not brought him down, he concealed himself and went to the farthest distances. Now the gods knew that Vṛtra had been slain

and that Indra had concealed himself....[66] This incidentally explains reference to the avenger in v. 15, and also to the frightened eagle who retires into the spaces. The avenger would be Vṛtra himself as Indra thought he had not been successful in destroying him.

Besides all this, it is important to note that the waters of seven rivers mentioned in v. 12 were hemmed up (*niruddhā āpaḥ*, v. 11) most probably by a dam which is here called a mountain (v. 1), and also mentioned in IV.17.3 as *girī*, mountain. Vṛtra was warding off Indra, not allowing him to approach the sluice valve of the dam, described here as the hole of the waters, *apām bilam* (v. 11). Indra by killing Vṛtra, takes charge of that *bila* and allows the waters to flow freely. This, as has been noted above, caused floods in the late stratum of Mohenjo-daro and other Harappan settlements situated downstream, like Amri, Lohumjo-daro, Jhukar etc. The process of sending untimely floods seems to have continued for some time. At least this is what the Ṛgvedic poet says in IV.17.8: *pūrviruṣasaḥ śaradaśca gūrtā vṛtram jaghanvān asṛjad vi sindhūns*/ During many praised dawns and autumns did he allow the waters to run, after killing Vṛtra. Indra seems to have opened and closed the valve many times. Thus he commanded the rivers.

The work of the officers called *rājukas* in Aśoka's administrative system as described by Megasthenes was, it may be of interest to note, similar. It is described as: "Some superintend the rivers, measure the land as is done in Egypt and inspect the sluices from which water is let out from the main canals into their branches so that everyone may have an equal supply of it. The same persons have charge also of the huntsmen and are entrusted of the power of rewarding and punishing them according to their defaults. They collect the taxes and superintend the occupations connected with the land, as those of the wood-cutters, the carpenters, the blacksmiths and the miners. They construct roads at every ten stadia, set up a pillar to show the bye-roads and distances."[67]

It is not clear whether the duties assigned to Vṛtra and his men referred to as *vṛtrāṇi* were identical with those of the *rājukas*, especially those concerning with the occupations connected with the land. However it seems plausible that Vṛtra and his men were guarding the dam and the sluice/s and in times of peace, they might have looked after the maintenance of dam and sluices, distribution of water for agricultural purposes, etc. They also may have taken care of the water channels and embankments.

17. Vala

Vala, as has been correctly noted by Macdonell, is the guardian of cows. √*val*, to turn, to turn round, is of later origin probably

artificially created to meet the grammatical needs. The term might be of local origin. However, a root in Marāṭhi viz. *vaḷaṇe* has the precise meaning of 'to go after the cattle, to look after them so that they do not fall in a pit or get lost' with or without the noun *gure*, cattle.

Vala is called *rakṣitāro dughānām*, the protector of the milchcows in ṚV X.67.6. As has been seen above, Indra had sent Saramā to locate the place where the cows of the Paṇis were hidden. She goes to the river Rasā, on the other bank of which the cows were kept hidden. It has been noted that the Paṇis are called in the JB as the cowherds of the devas who had hidden the cows of the devas. From the Ṛgvedic version of the episode the cows seem to belong to the Paṇis and were being looked after by Vala. In X.67.6 he seems to report the theft of the cows to the Paṇis, implying employee-employer relationship.

Indra had undertaken to open the cowstalls of the Paṇis for the sake of Aṅgirasas,[68] and they are his allies throughout the episode. In fact, Indra is twice called Aṅgirastama, chief Aṅgiras.[69] Praised by them, Indra pierced Vala[70] and burst open the cowstalls,[71] slew Vala and opened his enclosures.[72] The beginning of the episode might be with the Aṅgirasas asking him to open the cowstalls but the episode seems to begin with Saramā trying to get information about the secret place. After that Indra forces open the enclosure of Vala: " 'That shall be our old friendship with you', with thus speaking Aṅgirasas, you killed (the cow) enjoying Vala, you immovable moving master. You broke open his fortress, all its doors."[73] In I.52.5 the barriers of the cows of Vala are said to have been burst open by Indra when under the influence of Soma. In VI.39.2 'he has broken open the unbroken (mountain) side of Vala. With words Indra fought with Paṇis.' Thus the old friendship with the Aṅgirasas is revived in VI.18.5. After this he broke the barriers around the cows and fought the Paṇis with words and threw open the doors of the fortress of Vala which was probably situated on a mountain side. This fortress is compared with *phaliga*, a cask or leather-bag or is spoken of as *bila*, a hole, as in ṚV I.11.5 probably out of contempt. However, sometimes Vala the castle and the owner are identified. As for instance in ṚV II.14.3b: *yo gā udājad apa hi valaṃ vaḥ* which is translated as 'then he had opened the *vala* (hole)' by Geldner. Confusion about the meaning of Vala arises on account of the verb *apavaḥ* which is the aorist of *apa*+√*vṛ*. √*vṛ* as has been noted above means cover, hide etc. but also to ward off, to defend etc. Here *apa*+√*vṛ* may mean warded off with *apa* denoting intensity. Thus the clause may read 'who warding off Vala, drove out the cows'. Another instance of the same confusion is found in I.11.5 *tvam valasya gomato' pāvaradrivo bilam*/ you opened the stone of the hole of Vala possessing the cows. A more realistic description of the cowstalls is found in III.30.10: 'Without reclaiming (?) Vala had himself opened the cow-pen, yet fearful of your stroke. He made the way free, to drive out the cattle. The blowing

chorus, (the Maruts) encouraged you, the much-calling one.' Here the cowstalls are called as such. Indra, after entering the fortress has obviously threatened to kill Vala, who without putting up much resistance opened the cowstall to save his life. The same event is described in X.67.6: 'Indra had shattered Vala the guardian of milchcows through his roaring as if with a hand. With sweat-dabbed, he made his way to the milk seeking Paṇis with a cry; he robbed your cows.' This explains the words in VI.39.2 where Indra is said to have fought the Paṇis with words—it was enough to shout at Vala to intimidate him into opening the cow-sheds and Indra, accompanied by the Aṅgiraras for whom he had done all this, drove the cows away.

Vala is said to have been a brother of Vṛtra.

18. Tvaṣṭṛ

Though no natural phenomenon is associated with Tvaṣṭṛ, there are indications that he might have represented the aspect of a god or god Asura himself whom he seems to have served by making a bowl for him. As such the original status of Tvaṣṭṛ the god in pre-Aryan mythology might have been that of a minor deity who gave form to all the world and its creatures. He might have been associated with the cosmogonic activity of god Asura to the extent that he as an aspect of Asura has created the forms of things. In other words, he constituted the form creating ability of Asura. But there is no evidence to suggest such direct relationship between Asura and Tvaṣṭṛ. Therefore, it may be assumed that the latter might have been a minor godhead whose duty in the primitive pantheon was to give form to the creation of god. Thus in Tvaṣṭṛ may be recognised the remnants of the primitive beliefs and parts of the primitive non-Aryan pantheon which seems to be of considerable antiquity. In fact, it appears probable that the concept of Tvaṣṭṛ might have been older than those of the other functionaries of Asura-empire. In the conception of the other functionaries especially the Ādityas, a certain amount of systematization and one to one correspondence between the natural phenomenon thought of as ruling deity and the functionary is noticeable. But this systematization is not found in this case, because the older conception of Tvaṣṭṛ the form-giver was kept unchanged even after the creation of the new organisation. This may also indicate the antiquity of arts and crafts which were considerably older than the Asura form of social, political and economic organization found in Ṛgvedic hymns.

In ṚV X.110.9 Tvaṣṭṛ is said to have carved out the forms of all creatures and generated heaven and earth. He is also supposed to bestow the form on the foetus in X.184.1. He is called the master of forms.[74] In ŚB and Tai.Br. he is called the creator of forms.[75] He is also called Viśvarūpa, the (possessor) of all forms. As fashioner of living forms, he

is frequently described as presiding over generation and bestowing offspring.[76] The Viśvarūpa Tvaṣṭṛ is said to have created the husband and wife for each other in the womb itself.[77] This is said by Yamī to Yama and might have been the basis of the later belief in the indestructible nature of the marital bond. Tvaṣṭṛ himself has meant them for each other right from the time he fashioned them. He has produced and nourished a large number of creatures (III.55.19) and beasts belong to him.

Tvaṣṭṛ is said to have given birth to Bṛhaspatī (ṚV II.23.17); he produced agni, along with heaven and earth, the waters and the Bhṛgus (X.2.7; 46.9). Tvaṣṭṛ himself is born first but nothing is said about his parents or creator (IX.5.9), and he is called *agrīyam viśvarūpam*, the first all-formed one.

A seal found in Mohenjo-daro, known as the Yogi-seal, has the central figure of a divinity with faces on three sides, and probably conceptually also on the fourth, surrounded by the animals. The inscription on the seal is still undeciphered. Various interpretations of the central figure have been put forth. However, they do not satisfactorily explain the speciality of the central figure viz. the three faces, with a possibility of the fourth one. It seems that perhaps the four-faces of the figure represent the three-dimensional depiction of the concept of *viśva* which literally means all, every, every one, entire, whole, universal. The idea of the universal is expressed by drawing the faces on all sides. A similar depiction or translation of the concept of *viśva* in three dimensions is found in Buddhist Tantrism where the *viśvavajra* is made and depicted in a like manner. The vajra, which usually has two symmetrical ends is duplicated to form cross with four similar ends. This *vajra* is called *viśvavajra*. It seems probable that this three/four-faced deity was Viśvarūpa or a composite figure of Asura as the creator, in which case the Viśvarūpa or Tvaṣṭṛ will be one of its attributes or aspects.

The human traits of functionary Tvaṣṭṛ are not clearly delineated except his arm or hand which are described as beautiful. He is in one place described as yoking his two steeds to his chariot and shining greatly (VI.47.19). He is described as skilful workman, producing various objects showing the skill of an artificer.[78] He is in fact the most skilful of workmen versed in crafty contrivances (X.53.9). He designed a new cup (I.20.6) which contained the food of Asura (I.110.3). Later on Ṛbhus create similar cups for the devas and it seems the reference to the beverage of gods in I.161.5 may be treated in the context of those cups made by the Ṛbhus, referred to in the hymn earlier.

Tvaṣṭṛ is frequently said to have fashioned the thunderbolt for Indra. At best it can be a metaphorical expression. That is Tvaṣṭṛ had, as an artificer of the Asura-empire designed the thunderbolt for the use of the

Asuras, which was probably given to Indra by Uśanas as has been seen already. While creating the myths the agency of Uśanas through which the *vajra* was acquired was simply dispensed with and a direct relation between Tvaṣṭṛ's making the *vajra* and Indra was established, giving it the turn that *vajra* was made for Indra. The Ṛgvedic references and the narratives in the Brāhmaṇas[79] depict the enmity between Tvaṣṭṛ and Indra make it unlikely that Tvaṣṭṛ could have designed the weapon especially for Indra. The narrative in JB is summed up here: Tvāṣṭra Triśīrṣa is said to be the son of Tvaṣṭṛ and an Āsuri. He had three mouths with which he drank Soma, *surā* and *anna* (food). He spoke directly to the devas and indirectly to the asuras, which angered the devas, who decided to kill him. They cut his head asunder with vajra. Different birds flew out of the fallen heads. Tvaṣṭṛ seeing his son killed decided to kill Indra; however, Indra frightened him away. Indra entered his house and drank away the Soma kept for purifying. He drank it with the vessels themselves and went away. Tvaṣṭṛ created an enemy of Indra from the left-overs who was nobody else but Vṛtra.

The Soma consumed by Indra seemingly made him very sick and the Aśvins and Sarasvatī cured him from illness. In fact in the ŚB this incident is narrated as the basis for the origin of *Sautrāmaṇī*. By implication it may mean that Tvaṣṭṛ really tried to kill Indra by poisoning the Soma. Ṛgveda also retains some references to the enmity between Indra and Tvaṣṭṛ. The Soma incident is referred to in ṚV III.48.4cd: By nature, Indra, overcoming Tvaṣṭṛ, robbed the Soma and drank it out of the cups. In IV.18.3 Indra is said to have drunk soma at Tvaṣṭṛ's house. I.80.14 depicts Tvaṣṭṛ as trembling before Indra's fury out of fear. His thunder shattered all that stands and walks. Probably Indra after intimidating Tvaṣṭṛ, forced his way in his house and drank the Soma or carried away things. What is important is the clash between the two which weakens the tradition of Tvaṣṭṛ's making the thunderbolt for Indra. Tvaṣṭṛ's non-Aryan origin is indirectly conveyed by his marriage with an Āsuri and by his sworn enmity reflected in the creation of Vṛtra. The name of his son, Triśīrṣa as has been seen was also borne by a gandharva mentioned in another context and the flying out of the birds from the corpse symbolically refers to its being eaten by the birds, meaning left without any burial (or exposed ?).

In the light of the above incident, it may be observed that all the persons except Indra associated with *vajra* are of non-Aryan origin which seems to be an additional reason for its being a non-Aryan production acquired by the Aryans through their 'agents'.

The reflection of the enmity between Indra and Tvaṣṭṛ may be found in his not being addressed even a single hymn and that the person of Tvaṣṭṛ the official is described so little as to make the godhead more

prominent. However, it is still possible to have some idea of his function. He may have presided over the arts, crafts and technological innovations.

The Avesta has preserved the word *thwaksh* which is the equivalent of Skt. √*tvakṣ* which may be the root in Tvaṣṭṛ.

19. Ṛbhus

The Ṛbhus are three in number and are called Ṛbhu or Ṛbhukṣan, the chief of the Ṛbhus, Vāja and Vibhvan. They are distinguished as eldest, younger and youngest (ṚV IV.33.5). The story of their acquiring of the godhood is narrated in different places in ṚV. ṚV III.60 tells how the Ṛbhus became the partakers of the sacrificial offerings which is equivalent to their being bestowed the godhood:

1. Here and there, through reflection, through family-relation, through knowledge, has Uśij come to know these matters of you, you lords, through which magical power according to your impulse accepting another form, you son of Sudhanvan have obtained the share in the offering.
2. Through the art, with which you formed the cup, through the spirit of invention with which you drove the cow out of the skin, through which reflection, with which you fashioned the two steeds, through all this have you Ṛbhus obtained the godly rank.
3. The Ṛbhus obtained the friendship of Indra; the grandsons of Manu have themselves repaired as artisans on the journey. The sons of Sudhanvan have acquired the immortality, after that they had worked with right diligence, the craftsman with skill in (his) craft.
4. With Indra you travelled on the same chariot to Soma; at present may you be in the possession of the crown (of all) wishes. Your crafts are not comparable, your travelling (?) singer, still your heroic deeds, you Ṛbhus, the sons of Sudhanvan.

The Ṛbhus obviously offered friendship to Indra along with their skill in arts and crafts and made themselves indispensable. Through their wonderous deeds, they acquired immortality. By their skill they became gods, alighting like eagles in the heaven (IV.35.8). Those who were the men from *antarikṣa* (i.e. the region through which the rivers flow) have climbed to the heaven by their energy (I.110.6). The Ṛbhus went on the path of immortality to the hosts of the gods because of their skilled hands.[80] Children of mortals, they acquired immortality through their industry. The devas rejoiced in their services and Vāja became the artificer of the devas, Ṛbhukṣan of Indra and Vibhvan of Varuṇa; they were 'appointed' to serve the VIPs after their compact with Indra and it is significant that Varuṇa was allotted the lowest in their rank viz. Vibhvan.

Many wonderful almost miraculous deeds are attributed to them

which indicate that they might have worked in wood, leather, and probably also clay. They multiplied the wooden cup which was originally made by Tvaṣṭṛ most probably for making offerings to Asura. The gods commissioned Ṛbhus through Agni to make four (similar ?) cups out of the one made by Tvaṣṭṛ who praises the skill of Ṛbhus after their fulfilment of the commission, but was desirous of killing them for having desecrated, the cup of god (Asura ?), though they had denied of having entertained any such wish.[81] One the whole, the hymns addressed to Ṛbhus seem to be sung with tongue in cheek.

Ṛbhus might also represent the godheads of an older pantheon like Tvaṣṭṛ which is indicated in the myth woven around them. Initially they might have been the gods who presided over the work of cultivation and irrigation, especially of those areas which were difficult for such use. The myths which were associated with them are referred to several times in Ṛgveda. Later on when the organization underwent change to suit the needs of the more advanced society, they probably worked under Tvaṣṭṛ and that is how they are found in the Asura government. The myth is like this: They went round the sky with wind's speed. After much wandering they came to the house of Savitṛ, i.e. the morning and setting sun which is also probably referred to in Agohya, meaning bright, that which cannot be hidden, who confers immortality on them. They slumbered there for twelve days. Having enjoyed the hospitality of Savitṛ-Agohya, they made fair fields, directed the streams, plants occupied arid grounds and waters the lowlands. By their skill, they made grass on the heights and waters in the depths. Having slept, they asked Agohya as to who had awakened them; in a year they looked around.[82]

This seems to belong to the truly mythopoeic concepts of the beginning of irrigation and cultivation and probably refers to the mystery of the annual appearance and growth of vegetation on land and water in the streams. The reckoning of time is also mythopoeic, the twelve days in heaven become an year on the earth.

Thus the Ṛbhus were probably originally deities of cultivation and irrigation in the Asura pantheon and may be of considerable antiquity. They were superseded by the concept of Ṛta, cosmic and moral order, which in the second stage became the ruling concept on the basis of which both social organization and moral order came to be founded. In the third stage, if at all it can be called so, the functionaries who represented the social and moral order of the Asura empire were defeated and Indra became the supreme ruler. Many of them opposed him, many joined him and some left the country. And Ṛgveda seems to preserve all this conflict, this drama...

20. Agni

Though agni does not form part of the administrative system discussed above, it is necessary to understand the place of agni in the religious life of people so that the pattern interwoven through the concept of *ṛta* which was thought to function on cosmic and human level becomes clear. Just as in the administrative system there are said to be seven Ādityas who represent different aspects of sun at different times of the day and so on, the religious life too seems to have been centred around agni thought to represent the sun and hence Asura on the earth in seven different aspects. This is the reason why agni is also included in this chapter. Thus here too the two levels of *ṛta* may be perceived clearly.

The birth of agni is ascribed to different agencies on the cosmic plane. According to the ordinary view of the Vedic poets, agni's father is *dyaus* (sky) who generated him (X.45.8). He is the child of *dyaus* or *div* (sky, IV.15.8; VI.49.2). He is often called the son of *dyaus* and *pṛthivī*.[83] He is also spoken of as the offspring of Tvaṣṭṛ and the waters as well as heaven and earth.[84] In certain passages 'Agni is identified with the sun; for the conception of the sun as a form of Agni is an undoubted Vedic belief'. Thus it is said in III.2.14: 'Active like the bright (sun) on the journey, sun-eyed, the banner of heaven, staying in the brightness, waking up early in the morning, the undisputed head of the heaven, to the victory-winning Agni we begin with high salutations'. In X.187.4,5, he is born on the other side of the air (*rajas*), he sees the universe and the creatures. X.88 is addressed to '*sūryavaiśvānarogniḥ*'. Vv. 5, 6 run thus:

5. 'There you, Jātavedas, take your place at the peak of the world, with your bright light, O Agni, there we have stimulated you with songs, with eulogising songs, with praising-words. You are offering worthy, the world-filling.
6. Of nights Agni is head of the earth; out of him is born in the morning the rising sun. (See) still this piece of craft (*māyā*) of the sacrifice worthy god, that he begins his work punctually, the knower of path.'

In V.37.1, Agni is said to unite with the rays of the sun. In another place it is said 'Let us lead you today to the firewood, Agni, flame high, your smoke worthy of respect forcing upwards! Touch the heavenly high with your hair-crown; unite (you) with the rays of the sun!' When men light Agni on earth, the celestials light him: 'You, the symbol of Truth of the sacrifice, burn harmoniously for men of heaven, when this mankind desirous of your favour sacrifices in the service of god'.

In X.45, the various forms of Agni are enumerated:

1. From Heaven was agni born first, the second time from us, the Jāta-

vedas. For the third time in the water (born), for never tiring lighting, call him in good intention like the waking of thinking lord.
2. We know your thrice threefold (forms), O Agni; we know your forms, divided in many places. We know your highest name, which is secret; we know the source, whence you come from.
3. You, who in the ocean, in the water (staying) had as thoughtful lord, who lighted in the udder of heaven (staying) as a lord observing, O Agni. You, who stay in the third dark space, in the womb of waters, engender the great buffalo.
4. Agni roared as the thundering Heaven, licking the earth-ground, smearing the plants. Then the just born the flaming one has immediately after looked out for them; he blazed with his brightness between two world-halves.
5. Generous with distinction, holder of riches, rouser of thoughts, protector of Soma, the good son of might, the king in the waters, he shines before the dawn shines.
6. That banner of all, the child of world, he by his birth fills heaven and earth. He split even the firm rocks drawing far afar, as the five people worshipped agni.
7. A genuine interceder (?), a wise horse-harnesser is Agni, the immortal, placed amongst the mortals,...

The constant comparison of agni with the sun in the sky and at times a covert reference to the identity of the two may be noted. The agni in the heaven is no doubt the sun, the agni on the earth, the second time from us, is the discovery of fire on earth and for the third time, it was born in water. These are the three forms of agni to which the hymns in Ṛgveda are addressed. Thus the agni-worship on earth really is to be related to the worship of sun and the sun-god. The sun as a natural phenomenon is situated far from the earth. Though it can be seen, the distance proved to be a hindrance to developing an intimate relationship. This is overcome by making Agni the symbol of sun on earth. Looking at it from the utilitarian point of view after the discovery of fire and its various uses especially its uses for lighting can immediately connect it with the absent source of light viz. the sun. In fact, primitive man might have even thought of it as the representative of the sun during his absence sent to give beneficial light and heat.

In fact, in V.12.1, agni is identified with Asura. 'To the high sacrifice-worthy Agni, the leading animal of truth (*ṛta*), to the Asura I present this song like the well-purified ghee by way of sacrifice in his mouth, a praising speech to which the bull complies'. .In V.15.1, he is called the friendly Asura: 'To the recallable master and seer, I recite this speech, who stands in honour as earlier, sitting in the ghee, the friendly Asura, the holder of riches, the obtainer of good is Agni'. 'Of the overlord, of the Asura, praise I announce, of the manhood of the people (*kṛṣṭīnām*) to whom one must cheer. Like the deeds of Indra, I announce praising the strong one,

while (in this) I praise the praiser'.[85] ṚV III.29 deals with the procreative aspect of agni which is emphasized through √*math*. As has been already noticed it is always the creative force of Asura which is generally emphasized through various words, like the oft recurring term *māyā*, *māyin* etc. This particular hymn deals with the procreation on physical level. In that aspect agni is called Tanū napāt, who is said to be the foetus of Asura in v. 11, Narāśaṁsa being the produced one. Mātariśvan is the one which is contained in the mother's womb. And in v. 14, agni is said to be born from the belly of the Asura. Not only agni is Asura, is born from him but the creative ability of Asura is also attributed to agni in X.88.6 where the rising sun is said to be born from agni who is the head of the earth at night. The punctuality with which the sun rose every day is also mentioned. Another important point is the frequent reference to agni as the bull or the buffalo which is also associated with Asura. He is called a strong bull with a mighty neck (V.2.12), who bellows, abounds in seed (IV.5.3) and is provided with horns which he sharpens. He is also compared with steed and directly called so (I.149.3; VI.12.6). He is the horse to be tamed and directed (II.5.1; III.27.3). Just as the sun is called the bird, agni is also called the eagle of the sky (VII.15.4). The symbolism is very closely related to that of Asura, the sun-god. The bull and the horse signify probably virility on the physical plane and the power on the political plane if the latter is correlated to the later rite of *Aśvamedha* sacrifice. Thus there seems to have been a close relationship between Asura the sun-god and agni on the earth which was looked upon as the benefactor of mankind. The relationship was symbolic.

This agni was worshipped by the people. As has been already seen above in X.45.6, agni is worshipped by the five peoples. In VII.6.1, he is called the manhood of the *kṛṣṭi*, the cultivators. In VI.1.8, he is praised as the bull of *carṣaṇis*, cultivators. In X.53.4,5, agni asks the five peoples to offer him sacrifice. He says:

'4. I shall today devise it as beginning my speech, wherethrough we gods can overcome the Asuras. You consumer of food and you sacrifice-worthy, you five people, shall have satisfaction in my Hotṛ-office.
5. The five people shall have satisfaction in my Hotṛ-office the cow-born and the sacrifice-worthy (gods). The earth shall protect us from earthly sins, the *Antarikṣa* may protect us from heavenly [ones].'

It seems possible that hymns ṚV X.51-53 constitute a myth which explains the origin of the concept of sacrifice i.e. of the worship of agni. According to Geldner, hymn 51 is a conversation between Varuṇa and agni when agni was lost. This seems to form the older stratum of the myth, explaining the disappearance of agni in water. Whereas hymns 52 and 53 seem to be of later origin than hymn 51, as they refer to the *devāsura*-conflict. If, however, these three hymns had formed a single series, then

the references to the conflict with the Asuras have to be treated as later interpolations in the myth itself. However, ŚB I.2.3.1 narrates the episode in a different manner: 'Fourfold, namely, was Agni (fire) at first. Now that Agni whom they at first chose for the office of Hotṛ-priest passed away. He also whom they chose the second time passed away. He also whom they chose the third time passed away. He also whom they chose the fourth time passed away. Thereupon the one who still constitutes the five in our own times, concealed himself from fear. He entered into the waters. Him the gods discovered and brought forcibly away from the waters. He spat upon the waters, saying 'Bespitten are ye who are an unsafe place of refuge from whom they take me away against my will.'[86] It seems that this myth might have something to do with Agni's form called Apām napāt. It may also represent the first experience of man of discovering the extinction of fire with water? If this is so, then it may represent one of the very early myths about fire, and the relationship between fire and water. That the myth might have been of pre-Aryan origin is indicated by the association of Mitra and Varuṇa with the search for agni. Also as has been shown above, agni himself said that he has lived with Father Asura for a long time and in going away from him he is going from a friend to a foreign friendship. Thus the reference to the *devāsura* conflict in X.52 and 53 is the aryanization of the myth representing the beginning of the sacrificial system, which was probably instituted as a reward to agni for the assistance in the battles against asuras. As has been shown above, the term *pañcajanāḥ* really signified the peoples of the Harappan empire and despite the context of *devāsura*-conflict, the *pañcajanāḥ* may refer to these five people. Also the repetition of almost identical *pāda* makes the interpolation hypothesis likely. Moreover as has been pointed out above, the concept of sacrifice seems to have been borrowed from an older tradition, probably still available partially in the Avesta. Thus there are indications that the cult of fire was associated with god Asura and was probably the religion of the Asuras.

Agni was worshipped by the Asuras in an elaborate ritual in which several priests probably participated. The names of these Asura priests are mentioned in ṚV. They may be Mātariśvan, Aṅgiras, Atharvan, Atri, Kaṇva, Bhṛgu, Tanū napāt and Apām napāt. Each priest had a different function to perform. There were probably seven priests who performed the sacrifice with Mātariśvan as their leader. The number seven often appears in Ṛgveda and seems to have assumed certain importance in the minds of the poets. The importance seems to stem from the concept of *ṛta* which is said to have seven steps in ṚV X.8.4: 'For you go ahead of each Uṣas, you good, you become the brighter of both the twins. You have done the seven steps to the Law [*ṛta*], creating a friend in him for yourself.' The seven steps of *ṛta* may correspond to the seven stages through which the sun passes on the basis of which there were seven Ādityas. The sun is also said to have seven rays in VIII.72.16, where agni

'the high Lord has the gushing food, nutrition, accompanied by seven steps, milked out, with the seven rays of the sun'. In I.146.1 agni is called three headed and seven-rayed. The three heads might correspond to the three-forms of agni spoken in X.45, but the seven rays correspond to the seven stages in the development of sun, and therefore in *ṛta*. The Hindu marriage ceremony is not complete without the bride and bridegroom circumambulating seven times the fire-altar set up for the purpose, with the ends of their upper garments tied together. This is called *saptapadī* and probably was originally connected with the seven steps of *ṛta*, with which the relationship between the two individuals was given the sanction of sanctity and law rolled into one simply because *ṛta* was both cosmic and moral order. Once again, the so-called *vaidika* rite has asuric elements or rather origin.

Similarly, the seven priests represented the seven stages, with agni representing sun on the earth, who was identified with Mātariśvan, who brought agni from the heaven (I.93.6). Thus he is also the producer of fire. Agni is called Mātariśvan in III.5.9; 26.2; I.96.4. It is said, agni being born in the highest heavens appeared to Mātariśvan (I.143.2). In I.60.1, agni is brought by Mātariśvan to Bhṛgu as a gift of glorious offerer, the banner of sacrificial gathering, the messenger who has two births (*dvijanmānam*). Once again is met a concept viz. agni the twice-born which was to play a significant part later, in the construction of an Aryan social structure especially in the *rite du passage* devised by the Aryans for the upper three strata of the structure. The individual life and cosmic law were integrated or rather the individual was bound through certain rituals to cosmos or was born to it and thereby probably obtained a position in cosmic law. The ceremony of *upanayana* which is usually performed between the age of 5-10 after which the boy is required to wear a thread probably symbolising the bond established between him and the cosmos. The origin of this ceremony may go back to the myth referred to in I.60.1, the second birth of agni may be his earthly existence, sun being the first. In short, it is really the celebration of the discovery of fire on earth. Mātariśvan was probably the mythical figure associated with it and he was also represented by a human representative.

Aṅgirasa the ancestor of the Aṅgirasas who assisted Indra in renting open the cow-stalls of Vala, or for whom Indra seems to have performed this feat, seems to represent the phase when man discovered that agni can be maintained in its physical form by catching it in wood i.e. the sparks which may have come out of the friction of flint stones, and which is referred as the fire of rocks in ṚV. It died soon but it must have been a great joy and relief for the primitive man to find that this lightening could be caught in grass and wood and it seems Aṅgirasas represented this stage as they are said to have found agni hidden in the wood.[87] To them is attributed the origin of sacrifice in X.67.2:

'Speaking Truth [*ṛta*], thinking uprightly have the sons of the Heavens, the men of Asura, the Aṅgirasas, the seers making their traces on the path devised the first form of sacrifice.'

Here the Aṅgirasas are clearly called the men of Asura and to them the credit is given for devising the first form of sacrifice. Also in III.53.7 the Aṅgirasas are called the sons of *div* and the heroes of Asura. Thus the sacrifice was first meant probably for Asura who was symbolically present in agni which was like him in that he had both heat and light and could give these to man in sun's absence.

Atharvan, the ancestor of the Atharvans mentioned in plural in ṚV, was probably the ancient priest who rubbed agni forth (VI.16.13) and the Atharvan priest rubs it as did the ancient seers (VI.15.17). 'Through the sacrifice the Atharvans first placed firmly the order', or 'the Atharvans first made the paths, then was born *Sūrya* (sun), the eagle, observing the laws'. Thus though the idea was that of Aṅgirasa, proper order was set down by Atharvan which amounted to laying down the path for sun i.e. fire as the form of sun. This applied to the production of fire in which case the paths may refer to the sequential order in which fire-producing operations were performed.

In Avesta, *atar* (for *athar*) means fire which is the same as the Vedic term *athar*, which also occurs in *athar-yu*, flaming.[88] The fact that the Atharva-veda or Atharvāṅgirasau was the last to be allowed the status of a Veda may point to non-Aryan origin of the material contained in it, which will also explain the observation of archaic material, older than Ṛgveda, in it.

Atri appears, like all other names of priests, in plural as well as singular. The main function of the Atri priest might have been to predict the appearance of sun every day on the basis of astronomical calculations and probably they also sang the praises of sun at the time of sunrise so that it appeared as if the sun rose in answer to their praises. This may explain their association and even identification with *vāc* (speech) in ŚB.[89] However, the calculations of sun-rise seem to have been their main task as has been seen in the Svarbhānu-episode by which they helped Indra to fight the Asuras.

Little is known about the priest Kaṇva's precise function in the sacrificial system. However, he is associated with Manu and Aṅgirasa in I.139.9. The gods gave Agni to Kaṇva and others, they kindled it, praised it and were blessed by it. Probably it was their duty to praise agni.

Bhṛgus are chiefly associated with the communication of fire to men. Mātariśvan brought it to Bhṛgus (I.60.1) or kindled it for the Bhṛgus.

Bhṛgus produced the agni with their might (X.46.9). They had found him hiding in the waters (X.46.2), worshipped him there, they placed him in the abodes of Āyu or man (II.4.2). Rubbing the fire, they invoked him with prayer (I.127.7). The Bhṛgus were almost (like) gods in their skill in the production of agni (X.92.10). The Bhṛgus are mentioned as fighting against King Sudās (VII.18.6).

'The myth of the descent of fire and its communication to man is chiefly connected with Mātariśvan and the Bhṛgus.' Mātariśvan is said to fetch it from heaven whereas the Bhṛgus kindle it with their might. This difference may be interpreted as that between chance discovery and the establishment of a conscious process requiring certain skill and strength. The original discovery which might have been a chance was the work of Mātariśvan. The Bhṛgus, however, established the process of lighting fire through their might.

Apām napāt seems to represent that agni which was hidden in water. Agni is said to be Apām napāt (III.9.1). Agni is Apām napāt who sat down on earth as a dear priest (I.143.1). Agni is also called the embryo of the waters.[90] As such he is also deposited in human dwellings (III.5.3), his abode is in the waters and the two fire-sticks generate agni who is the embryo of plants and of waters (III.1.13). It seems that Apām napāt represents the creative energy in plants and waters, which is thought of as the innate fire which makes them generate the species. The human embodiment of Apām napāt is also described in the only hymn addressed to him solely i.e. ṚV II.35. In vv. 2-5 he is described as standing in the waters. He is Asura and he is youthful. Three divine females desire to give food to the divine lord. In fact, the verses seem to refer to a ritual scene which involved the acceptance of food from the representative of goddesses, the priestesses (apsaras ?), after which the priest performed a ritual intercourse with them near the water and also sucked the milk of the mothers of the first-born. In return probably they kiss him. The ritual seems to have been enacted in two different capacities viz. Apām napāt first acted as the depositor of seed and then again thought of himself as the child born from his own seed. This might have something to do with an ancient myth probably the Babylonian myth of Apsu and Tiamat, sweet water or Abyss and the ocean whose waters mingled giving birth to the different gods. Apām napāt was the waters which are referred to several times in the course of the hymn and the goddesses represent the dragon Tiamat. In the Avesta, Apām napāt is a spirit of the waters who lives in their depths, is surrounded by females and is often invoked with them and is said to have seized the brightness in the depth of the ocean.[91] The activities around the great bath excavated at Mohenjo-daro might have been of this nature. The rituals relating Apām napāt might have been performed there with the apsaras as the priestesses and there might have been some ritual associated with the first-child by which mothers of the

first-born may have visited this place to give a suck to this ritual child of theirs. The custom sounds possible in the light of the Babylonian practice by which every woman was obliged to go once in her life, to sit at a temple and satisfy the first man who threw a coin at her. When she had intercourse with a stranger, she was free to go home.[92]

Tanū napāt is not well defined in the few occurrences in Ṛgveda. But it is possible to form some vague idea from ṚV III.29. The whole hymn is addressed to agni and the aspect of agni it deals with is defined in the first verse itself: This is a rubbing frame, the generative organ is ready. Bring here the clan-wives, we shall rub the fire as before. In the second verse agni is said to live in the two rubbing sticks. He is said to live just as the foetus lies in the pregnant woman. This *garbha* is called Tanū napāt and is the foetus of Asura. When it is born, it is called Nārāśaṁsa. It seems that Tanū napāt represented the generative force in man by which man procreates physically. This is suggested through comparison and through the process of generative agni. It mainly represents the procreative energy in man seen as fire.

An important point about the arrangement of hymns in Ṛgveda is that every *maṇḍala* except VIII and IX begin with the hymns addressed to Agni mostly exclusively, (followed by those addressed to Indra) which may indicate the sanctity attached to agni by the compiler. Of course, it may be argued that the arrangement may also reflect the sentiments of the Aryans in the period after the sacrificial system was set up, but the composers of the hymns were apparently the non-Aryans, the descendants of the defeated.

Thus there were probably seven priests and one head priest who embodied the different aspects of agni who himself symbolised the sun on earth. A seal discovered at Mohenjo-daro[93] depicts a scene where a god is depicted within a tree. A human figure is kneeling in front and probably invoking him. Beside him stands a bison and below, in the second row, are seven human figures with identical head-dress, clothes etc. There are some pictographs at the left top. The figure of the god can be identified as that of Asura as the tree is the pipal tree which seems to be associated with him. The kneeling priest and the seven other priests may be the seven agni priests discussed above. The scene probably depicts the scene when the world was created by god Asura as described in ṚV III.38. These eight seers are the ones who noticed the traces left behind by those who created the world. The bison represents the creation of Asura. The seven priests referred to in the Ṛgveda as Saptarṣī are probably these seven sages.

21. Uṣas

The dawn as the natural phenomenon and Uṣas, its earthly embodi-

ment, are both delineated in ṚV. The dawn as giving birth to sun once again represented the generative function, this time in woman. Thus Uṣas, the priestess connected with the sacrifice, was probably the representative of the mother-goddess who presided over the fertility cult. However, Uṣas as a phenomenon closely related to sun's birth is described in greater detail. Ritually she might have been associated with the function of engendering agni, the manner being unknown.

The largest bunch of hymns found together viz. VII.75-81 are addressed by Vasiṣṭha, a name meaning brightest, and probably fits well in the context. Vasiṣṭha, as has been shown by Kosambi[94] was probably a son born to an apsara from Mitra and Varuṇa. Thus her relation to light is emphasized through various means.

The natural phenomenon of dawn is described in great details and very often compared with a charming woman. Dressed in gay garments she is said to display her bosom like a dancer.[95] Like a maiden decked by her mother, she shows her form.[96] Clothed in light the maiden appears in the east, and unveils her charms.[97] Rising resplendent as from a bath showing her charms, she comes with light, driving away the darkness (V.80.5,6). The ever recurring natural phenomenon is thought to be immortal. So it is said 'as she has shone in former days, so she shines now and will shine in future, never aging, immortal (I.113.13-15). The maiden coming again awakes before all the world (I.123.2). Ever shortening the ages of men, she shines forth, the last of the dawns that have always gone, the first of those to come (I.124.2).'

The function the dawn is supposed to serve is to awaken the sleeping and to urge the living.[98] When the dawn shines, the birds fly up from their nests and men seek nourishment (I.124.12). She lights the paths of men, wakening the five tribes.[99] She dispells darkness and reveals the hidden treasures, distributing them bountifully.[100] She never infringes the ordinance of order and of the gods; she goes straight along the path of order, knowing the way she never loses her direction. She is asked to wake up the devout and generous worshippers leaving others to sleep on. The Vasiṣṭhas claim to have first awakened her which might probably indicate that they were the ones who noticed the beauty and grandeur of the dawn first and celebrated it in hymns.

Uṣas the priestess was probably of noble birth. As has been noted above, the dawns awakened the five tribes and also she is asked in X.55.4: '...what is your latest relationship with the remotest—that is the one great Asura power of the great (Uṣas)?' It sounds as if it is spoken by Indra sarcastically to Uṣas after he captured her! Anyway it seems to have been addressed to the priestess and presupposes a certain relationship with Asura which was for some reason jeopardised and the

questioner sounds as if he is revelling in the idea. She is also said to be related to Varuṇa and to be the sister of Bhaga in I.123.5. In several places she is called of noble birth,[101] Sujātā being her epithet. She is also called the daughter of *div*, probably more in relation to the natural phenomenon. It is probable that the office of Uṣas the priestess was given to a princess of noble birth, preferably the king's sister. Similar custom prevailed in ancient Mesopotamia and it is not impossible that Uṣas was really a relative of Varuṇa and other Adityas. That she represented the goddess may be correct as she is called *devī marteṣu mānuṣī*, the human goddess amongst the mortals. As the representative of the dawn on earth, she was probably someway connected with sacrifice: In ṚV VII.78.3, she is said to have engendered sun, sacrifice and fire; in VII.80.2, it is said the bold young woman goes ahead comprehending well sun, sacrifice and fire.

Ṛgvedic poets also speak of the conflict between Uṣas and Indra in several places: II.15.6; IV.30.8-11; X.138.5. The most detailed description falls in the IVth *maṇḍala*, other references being shorter. ṚV IV.30.8-11:

8. Also this heroic deed and manly deed, O Indra, hast thou done that you hit the disgracious woman, the daughter of *Div*.
9. Uṣas who nevertheless is daughter of *Div*, who herself does great things have you the great one shattered, O Indra.
10. Uṣas ran away from the shattered car out of fear as the bull had smashed it.
11. There lay her car smashed entirely in the (river) Vipāś. She herself had run away into distance.

There is a fleeting reference to the shattering of the car of Uṣas in II.15.6 and X.73.6 and another in II.20.5 according to Sāyaṇa. It is difficult to relate the last reference to the Uṣas-incident though it may be connected with Vala-narrative, as suggested by Geldner.[102] The incident of the fourth book seems to be historical enough, even the location having been cited as on the banks of Vipāśā. In X.138.5: 'The Vṛtra-killer with unfightable troops is liberal with his powerful bursting (thunderbolt); he sharpens the thundering weapons; she was afraid of being hit by Indra's thunderbolt; the ornament fell away; Uṣas left her car in the hole.' Probably after this Indra won her heart: Uṣā *maghonī* (gift distributor) became Indratamā. Indratamā may be interpreted in many different ways but literally it may mean 'most Indra-like'. She probably reconciled herself to the position and made the best of it. Kosambi thinks that this state of affairs might have been prior to her attempt at escape which was foiled by Indra. The bid to escape appears to be prior to subjugation which at one stage promised to be violent.

The plural of Uṣas might be indicatory of the priestesses, who are said to be three in two places.[103] In III.31.4, they are mentioned in con-

nection with the Vala-episode. 'When they recognising victorious Indra, came out to meet him.'

22. Pṛthivī, Antarikṣa, Div

As a logical application of the concept of *ṛta* on the cosmic level to the earthly areas which were governed and inhabited by those who represented the cosmic order on the earth, comes the division of the earthly spaces into *pṛthivī*, *antarikṣa* and *div* which were the earthly counterparts of the cosmic spaces. The representatives of the cosmic order lived and functioned as if they are governing the whole of cosmic space, the natural sphere of their activity. However, a geographical scheme was cleverly evolved in which *pṛthivī*, the earth, was identified with the broad Indo-Gangetic plain, *antarikṣa*, the middle space with the region through which the seven rivers flow and *div*, (lit.) shining spaces, the region west of the Indus including north-west frontier region of the Indian subcontinent, Baluchistan, Afghanistan and parts of Iran. That the Vedic poets were acquainted with some such division of the areas involved is obvious from the hymns. The natural phenomena in the cosmic order are described as coming from heaven as also the functionary which only led to the merger of the one into the other thus making mythopoeism easier. The interpretation of the three terms suggested here dissolves the apparently irrational elements making the narratives perfectly realistic.

As has been discussed above in Chapter III.7, Viṣṇu's three steps, which in later tradition are said to have covered the earth, middle space and sky, are in the Ṛgveda the three traverses of the *pṛthivī* i.e. the Indo-Gangetic plain itself. He made land available for cultivation on this broad plain and he gave the land to men for inhabitation. The expression that frequently occurs in relation to his traverses is *pārthivāni rajāṁsi* i.e. the earthly spaces or literally the broad spaces, which incidentally means that the traverses of Viṣṇu were performed here on the earth.

The references to *antarikṣa* occur in the context of the Aśvins and Pūṣan. ṚV I.116.3 refers to the Bhujyū episode: 'Tugra had left behind Bhujyū in a water reservoir, O Aśvins, as some dead person his property. You carried him off upon animated, swimming (flying) through the air, watertight ships.' In the translation 'air' stands for '*antarikṣa*'. The terms for swimming and for ships, animated and watertight, are all direct expressions and do not seem to have been used metaphorically. The word 'flying' within the brackets is supplied by Geldner, probably because it was warranted by the conception of *antarikṣa* as the middle space, air, through which a ship was not thought to swim. But if it is really air, why ships, *watertight* and animated necessary to pass through it? If the Aśvins were capable of moving in the air, the mundane device like a flying ship was

quite unnecessary for the purpose. The wording of the verse, however, seems to point to the use of ships in water, in fact a great mass of water. If the working hypothesis put forth above is correct, then it would imply that the *antarikṣa* contained a mass of water in which ships could go about and at the present state of knowledge, it seems plausible that *antarikṣa* was the region through which the seven rivers flowed and the *samudra* which is referred to elsewhere or *udamegha* in the above verse might have indicated the dammed up waters of the seven rivers. This alone can make the verses like the one cited above meaningful. In fact, the Aśvins are said to rescue people in distress on the ocean in ship or ships. They travel on the ground in a chariot while coming from ocean (IV.43.5). Their ship is also called *śatāritra*, with hundred oars.

To take another illustration found in ṚV VI.58.3, 'your golden ship, Pūṣan, travels in the aerial sea with which do you carry the messages for Sūrya, as lover desirous of honest appreciation'. Here again the translation 'aerial sea' stands for *samudre...antarikṣe* and the mention of the ship also seems to be straightforward. Moreover, the context of the verse is also realistic. Illustrations of this type can be multiplied.

To say that the region of *div* may have been west of Indus, there is no definite evidence, except the logic of the scheme itself. That is on the cosmic level earth is the lowest region above which is middle space and above it is the sky. This is an arrangement seen vertically. If the same arrangement is to be applied horizontally regionwise, then *div* may cover the region to the west of the Indus. Also certain prominent natural phenomenon peculiar to this region is associated with the functionary who hails from this region. Such phenomenon is obtainable in the Maruts who represent the thunder showers which are a common phenomenon in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The Aṅgirasas, the heroes of Asura, are also said to come from *div* in ṚV III.53.7. The gandharvas, after whom Gāndhāra was known, are said to be subjects of Varuṇa in the ŚB.[104] Atharvan, probably what came to be known as Atharva-veda later is said to be the Veda of the Gandharvas and the Aṅgirasa, that of the Apsaras.[105] In fact, they may have been the sacred books of the Asura-religion as a whole. But after the Asuras had fallen into disgrace because of the tough opposition to the Aryans and as the Gandharvas accepted the suzerainty of the Aryans, the Veda Atharvāṅgirasau was called theirs. In the same passage Soma is said to have been the king of the Apsaras, which probably refers to the story when the Soma was with the Gandharvas, Apsaras being traditionally considered their wives. Further most of the region indicated above is mountainous and thus above the level of *antarikṣa* and *pṛthivī*.

The hypothesis is now examined in the light of the archaeological material available. Thus in the course of the discussion an attempt will be

made to locate the points of similarity in the material cultures of the region especially to the west of the Indus and the Indus valley itself. This will incidentally determine the extent and nature of Harappan influence on the neighbouring areas. Archaeologically, it may sound incredible that such a vast region should have been knitted together culturally or otherwise, which makes the task intimidating.

The idea of an empire, smacking of colonialism, does not seem to be very popular. However, the phenomenon of rise and fall of certain settlements outside Indus valley, as it is seen in the following discussion, does reveal certain dependence either by way of organisation through a central agency or at least culturally in some respects, if not wholly. Moreover, Varuṇa and Mitra or Varuṇa alone are called *samrājau*, sovereign lords, universal or supreme rulers, those who rule over other princes, which concept clearly implies political domination. However, it is not possible to know or infer the political dominion from archaeological material, unless some written records are found. Therefore, the word empire has been used mainly on the basis of literary evidence. Some archaeologists seem to be opposed to the idea of Harappa culture being ever an empire and would rather consider it 'a shifting phenomenon both spatially and temporally'.[106] This conclusion seems to be unjustified. The conclusion is based mainly on the radio-carbon dates, which seem to indicate that the metropolitan Harappan culture flourished between 2300-2000 B.C. and in the provincial regions 2200-1800/1700 B.C. If, for the sake of argument, it is granted that the Harappan culture came into being around 2300 B.C. and flourished for the next 500 years or so, spreading itself in the provincial regions from the metropolitan centres, which proposition itself is open to examination, the continuity in the spread remains. The expression 'shifting phenomenon' would be justified if after the provincial cultures had come up, the metropolitan culture had disappeared or vice versa. In that case the centres would have shifted altogether. But the more important problem is: how does a culture spread? It takes roots simultaneously in one or more places which serve as the takeoff centres for the next stage. Thus during the second stage in which the culture is transmitted, new groups are organized, new land is brought under cultivation, population increases, in short a whole chain of actions and reactions is set in motion. Moreover, urban centres, which Mohenjo-daro and Harappa were, simply could not exist and flourish on their own without the supporting hinterland and a sizeable surplus. Further, the people migrating from one country to another and establishing political sway over the people of the new country as did the Harappans over the pre-Harappans at certain sites in the Indus valley would always try to consolidate their position in one or more places. The consolidation would depend on their number, their resources, and military strength. Making that their stronghold, they would try to expand their territory. Expansion in uninhabited areas may be quicker. So it is inevitable that certain settlements should precede others. However, what

is important is whether both have flourished at any time side by side forming a certain continuity. It seems rather premature to depend solely on the radio-carbon dating, the other method being that of cross-dating. The latter is more reliable especially if one of the two cultures being compared has verifiable chronology. In determining the chronology Agarwal seems to have completely ignored the yet unexcavated levels of Mohenjo-daro, where the citadel wall seems to have existed from early times. At Harappa also, where pre-Harappan sherds were found deep down at the foot of the defences, the citadel existed from early times, which means that soon after their arrival, Harappans had established enough settlements of their own people and probably those of the earlier population around Harappa which could produce enough grains to meet the needs of the population which must have included some specialists like potters, brick-makers, masons, priests, etc. All this presupposes complex social structure and technological development. However, there is yet another possibility and that is in the beginning the pattern of organization might have been that of Mesopotamian city states from which gradually the vast area from the Himalayan foothills to Baluchistan was brought under one political and social organization, which was the basis of the empire. It is evident that more data are necessary to draw conclusions embracing the whole development of the Indus civilization. Till then the statements concerning the sequential development may remain provisional; at best the spatial extent of the civilization may be examined and whenever possible chronology may be established on the basis of cross-dating.

Archaeologically, uniformity of material culture is a criterion of the political sway of a central authority and a community bound together through certain cultural traits spread over a region. However, is it possible to find traces of political domination of a foreign power with its seat of government outside the land, coupled with certain amount of cultural freedom in the archaeological remains, excepting the written records? In preliterate society such traces are difficult to come across. However, as the literary sources indicate, the Asuras had set up an organization in which probably the pre-Asura population had found a place and a function and also they had established contacts beyond their actual sphere of political control. The nature of these contacts is the subject of the discussion. From this can be determined the nature and amount of the influence the Asuras had over, what are described in the literary sources as, their friends or allies. As has been shown above, the Asuras of ṚV had close ties with the Gandharvas who are even called the subjects of Varuṇa and also they are one of the five peoples forming the basic stratum of the society. Rudra and the Maruts are said to have come from *div* and so on. This does not indicate vassalage but it is quite clear that these peoples fought against the Aryans at least in the beginning and later on joined the Aryans with the hope of saving their lives and of material gains. This assistance in

war or being an integral part of the social and political organization may indicate minimally either an alliance against a common enemy or in the peaceful times prior to the Aryan threat, a willing acknowledgement of superior political power. Is it possible to verify this on the basis of archaeological evidence available now? The archaeological evidence by its very nature can supply only limited amount of information. In this particular case, it is at best possible to determine cultural influence in terms of contacts between the two cultures. Further, if this influence bears some indications of the nature of relationship between the two cultures, certain provisional conclusions might possibly be drawn. Amongst these features, and especially in the absence of written records, may be counted the motifs on pottery, seals, animal and human figurines and the nature of architecture.

First in order to lay down the guidelines along which the evidence may be looked for, it is necessary that the motifs, seals, etc. which were important to the Harappans for some reason are decided upon with certain allowances for local style and also simultaneously looking for possible variations occurring as a rule which may indicate conscious change. That is to say if the rulers of Indus valley were as organised as they seem to be in the Indus valley, and if really they had any hold over the neighbours, a certain pattern to assert their hold while granting certain freedom to the local ruler may be looked for. The concept of *ṛta* seems to be deeply embedded in the thought, life and organization of the Asuras and as such one may look for the palpable indications of this concept in the pattern of assertion of the Asura-domination. As a perceptible indication of these, the motifs and symbols connected with Asura as the central focus of the *ṛta* may be looked for. Thus among the motifs in the pottery-paintings comes the pipal-leaf motif which is found on the seals as a pictograph and in relation to the god and it may be looked for as a pottery-painting or otherwise outside Indus valley. Amongst archaeologists too on account of its unvarying outline, the leaf has come to be known as the most typical of all the Indus plant motifs.

Probably Starr is correct in saying: 'The exception is the leaf shape which as the Harappan design par excellence travelled along with Harappan power to the neighbouring region.... By it we should in the future be able to recognise Harappan influence among objects discovered beyond the basin of the Indus.'[107]

Next in order is the bull-motif which is found frequently enough on the Indus seals, in the form of terracotta figurines but very rarely on the pottery. The Bull with the manger is a motif characteristic of the Indus valley and when found elsewhere it is associated with the Indus valley.[108]

The third motif is that of eagle which is also associated with Asura,

as sun-god. In fact the sun is thought of as a bird travelling from one end of the sky to another. As has been noted above one seal with an eagle and two serpents on its sides is found at Harappa. The scarcity of the motif itself may speak of the importance attached to it. One might even associate it with the seal of the ruler himself. As he was the representative of Asura in the earthly state, he could also use the unique symbol of Asura as his own.

Besides this several other common motifs may be met with which will be pointed out in the course of the discussion.

As has been shown above all these symbols are associated with god Asura and their presence outside the Indus valley may at least indicate contact with the Indus valley, and at the most certain cultural bond. The nature of such influence, though difficult to determine from archaeological sources alone, seems to have been vital in the growth of those settlements.

Evidence of contact found at sites outside the Indus valley is discussed below. The sites are situated to the west of river Indus. First in order is the rock-shelter of Ghaligai.

The excavations near the rock-shelter of Ghaligai in the Swat valley were conducted by G. Stacul.[109] Stratum 19 has revealed a vase with high collar and slightly everted rim decorated with simple horizontal black bands. This vase also occurs in stratum 18. Stacul has noted the correspondences: Harappa cemetery R 37, Mundigak in the levels of Period IV, Amri IIIA, Kot Diji among the Harappan production of stratum IV, Kalibangan in the Harappan levels of Period I.[110] In stratum 18 this vase occurs along with cups on conical pedestals or vases with narrow necks and slightly everted rim and the excavator has pointed out the correspondences especially in the sites of northern Baluchistan. After stratum 18, in strata 17 and 16, the pottery shows a sharp decline in quality. The shapes are limited, very crudely made and generally a poor picture of the culture is affirmed by the reappearance of manufacture of pebble tools and animal bone implements. As has been pointed out by Stacul here, similar sudden change has been noted at many other sites from northern Soviet Turkmenistan to Afghanistan and the Indus valley. In Rana Ghundai IV new pottery shapes and techniques along with ornamental motifs of the post-Harappan Jhukar culture are met with. Strata 19 and 18 have been attributed to 3rd to 1st quarter of 2nd millennium B.C. (1800±50). The sudden change in the pottery type and the degeneration in the technique are significant.

Next comes the site of Mundigak in Afghanistan. Mundigak IV reveals the transformation of a settlement into a town with massive

defensive walls and square bastions of sun-dried bricks. There is an extensive building which probably housed the central authority and a temple on another smaller mound has also been found. The pottery became more and more of the type of black-on-red ware with the naturalistic decorations of birds, ibex, bulls, pipal trees and leaves. Besides pottery female figurines of the Zhob mother goddess type and the male head with hair bound by a fillet, possibly related to the heads and other male figures found at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and Kalibangan point to a close contact with the Harappan civilization. In fact, the strong analogies may be indicative of more than mere contact. The significant point to be noted is that the urban developments are associated with Harappan influence. The excavator has observed a break with the past through a change in the pottery forms and the painted decorations. Out of 7 forms of pottery which were used in Periods III and IV and some even from the beginning of the cultural sequence, only one continued to be used in the following period V, two forms from Period IV and two new forms are introduced in Period VI and VII but were discontinued in Period V. The most characteristic decoration of the Harappan period which had started appearing towards the end of Period III completely disappears in Period V.[111] All this meant for the excavator an introduction of a new people which of course did not mean a complete disappearance of the autochthonous population which is reflected in the continuation of some types of ceramics. Although they existed, the pre-eminence had passed over.[112]

The first indication of the presence of the Asuras and the Rakṣas in Baluchistan is found in the names of the localities, rivers etc. and also as the linguistic evidence in this area suggests. In Baluchistan, the northernmost division of Makran is known as Rakhshān valley in which several ancient sites have been located by Stein. Rakhshān is also the name of the river. In Makran are found the speakers of Brahui, a language belonging to the Dravidian family. This Brahui speaking population is also found in Jhalawan and Sarawan hills. It seems that the name Rakhshān is composed of two elements *rakhsh*+*ān*. *Ān*, as has been pointed out above, is an Elamite place-name ending,[113] if *rakhsh* and *rakṣ* (Skt.) are assumed to be identical, or someway related. Besides this the name of the river Sūrab in northern Baluchistan and the site called Sūrjangal also might have been asura-ab and asura-jangal, though no evidence can be cited to support this.

As has been seen above Sutkah-gen dor, Sotkah-koh, and Balaghat are the three sites which are identified as the fortified coastal posts of the Harappan civilization, which only means that the coastal area was directly under the power of the Asuras. Now let us see what indications we can gather about their presence in the interior. In Kalat at the sites of Pir Hassan Shah,[114] and Tagazi Damb,[115] is recorded the pipal-leaf motif. In addition to this Tagazi Damb has two sherds with the sun motif.[116] In Rakhshān at Badrang Damb is recorded the pipal-leaf motif, painted in a highly

stylized manner.[117] At Kargushki Damb is also found the pipal-leaf motif on a black background.[118] In addition to this at Shahi-tump, the pieces of the steatite pots[119] probably imported from Tepe Yahya are recorded which makes the cemetery at Shahi-tump probably contemporary with Yahya IVB. Shahi-tump people also had the bull-cult amongst their religious beliefs. Several terracotta bull-figurines of *bos indicus* are recorded by Stein.[120] The central design of clockwise five-armed Svastika may also be seen as a sun-motif.[121] At Balor in Kolwa (Makran) is found one sherd with the solar motif in black on red.[122] At Hor Kalat the bull is painted on pottery.[123] Zik mound in Kolwa has yielded both pipal-leaf motif and bull painted on pottery as also a bull-figurine.[124] At Kulli, bull motif in a highly stylized shape appears on the pottery,[125] and also the female figurines signifying the belief in the mother-goddess. Bull figurines are also recorded.[126] Besides this a string of pipal-leaves is found on two sherds.[127] A tree with pipal-like leaves is also found.[128] At Kulli are also recorded the perforated pots. At Siah Damb where a few sherds of black on red were discovered also had the pipal leaf painted on one of them in the Nal style.[129]

At Nundara the pipal-leaf motif and sun motif are recorded.[130] Men-Damb pottery shows affinities with Kulli and Siah Damb. It also has yielded numerous terracotta figurines of bulls, and a striking head, probably of a mother-goddess figurine.[131] At Shahdinzai, once again pipal leaf appears on the pottery neatly executed on black over a fine dark red slip. At Mehi, the pottery is dark red with black painted designs amongst which is a pipal-leaf motif with oblique hachures, and is accompanied by bull figurines and those of mother goddess. The bull is also found in front of a tree (pipal ?) and with a manger. The sun-motif is found incised in the centre around which are paintings running in circle.[132] Another important article found at Mehi (I.6.4) is a small bowl of black stone (steatite ?) with incised geometrical pattern which might have come from Tepe Yahya as the technique and the style of the design seems to be similar to the pieces found at Mohenjo-daro, which may be of great significance in determining the chronology of the site. Saka-kalat yielded the bull painted in Nal-style and the pipal-leaf distinctly painted in black on red background, mixed with another kind of pottery which is later and with brown designs on buff background.[133] At Shari Damb a sherd with solar motif executed in black on red background is recorded by Stein.[134] Though Nal style of pottery painting is distinct from that of Harappan sites, pipal-leaf motif, the solar motif and the bull are all present. Bull figurines and crudely made female figurines probably of the mother goddess testify the cultic affinities of Nal people with the Harappans. At Rana Ghundai, Periano Ghundai, and Moghul Ghundai the pipal-leaf motif is altogether absent. However, at Rana Ghundai the solar motif is recorded by Stein,[135] along the bull motif on the pottery and the bull cult as reflected in the bull-figurines. The female figurines signify the cult of the mother goddess. The eagle with open wings is found on pottery. It seems that the case of Rana

Ghundai is similar to that of Shahr-i-sokhta and the settlements displaying signs of close contacts with the Indus valley. And as has been shown below this has something to do with the peaceful penetration of the Harappan political power in this area or alternatively the absence of pipal-leaf motif coupled with other signs of contact may be indicatory of a relationship which is distinct but within the cultural sweep of the Indus civilization. The pipal-leaf probably sympolically indicates two parts brought together in a unity. The memory of the distinct existence of the two united together is probably brought home. And in fact, the two parts of the pipal leaf separated by the central vein may really be the representation of the sky and the earth, the *rodasī*, which were believed to have been first united together and were made into two by the fathers and now too hold together the universe.

B. de Cardi in her 'Excavations at Bampur, S.E. Iran: a brief report',[126] attributes the change in the pottery forms and decorations of Bampur V in a sequence of VI periods to a contact with an alien culture which becomes apparent in Period IV.3 The mixture of pottery types identical with that of Bampur Period IV.3 is found in Khurab Burial Bii which has been treated as a definite indicator of the presence of newcomers in Bampur valley and since it was not considered alien enough to be included in funeral furnishings, de Cardi thinks it most likely that "the infiltration into the region was not at first resisted".[137] 'In Period V, however, both the stratigraphical and stylistic evidence points to the submergence of the local inhabitants.'[138] The pottery of this period is described as inferior to the earlier wares, poorly fired, red ware, either unslipped or with a thin buff wash, with a limited range of forms with emphasis on wide, globular, thick-walled vessels. The decoration was naturalistic panels of birds and horned animals, fronds of palm-trees, coil decoration and the unmistakable pipal-leaf.[139] In Period VI mass production with a limited range of designs applied to a few practical well-made forms is apparent. Red ware was well fired, often orange in tone. However, black-on-red ware predominated. Pots with stand are also noticed.[140] The causes of the end of the settlement are unknown. The affinities of the site are still (i.e. in 1971) a matter of controversy. The work of Schmandt and Lamberg-Karlovsky in this context is discussed below.

A settlement going back from Partho-Sassanian period to the neolithic period starting with 4500 B.C. has been excavated at Tepe Yahya by C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky.[141] Period VI the earliest has coarse ware and is described as Neolithic (4500-3800 B.C.). Period V above it falls between 3800-3400 B.C. is called the Yahya culture. It is architecturally and ceramically directly paralleled in the Tal-i-Iblis and I and II levels, clearly in the site of Chah Husseini. Some Nal sherds were also discovered in Period V. Period IV which is divided in three sub-periods C, B, A covers 3000-2500 B.C. There is a marked change between the Yahya culture Period and

this period in that Period IVC & B are accompanied by Proto-Elamite tablets, cylinder and stamp seals, ceramics, steatite bowls and vases and their architectural associations. Period IVC has bevelled-rim bowls of a thinner and harder variety, very like those reported from Susa C and Tal-i-Iblis. Cylinder sealings find almost identical parallels in the sealings of Susa C(b) in which Proto-Elamite tablets were found. All the items suggest strong Susa C, Iblis 5 and Sialk IV parallels. As far as the pottery of this period is concerned it is directly paralleled at Shahr-i-sokhta III in the form of painted black on grey and black on buff. It has correspondences at Shahdad, a settlement and cemetery site north-east of Kerman. Throughout Period IVC, strong parallels to the whole sequence of Bampur II-IV can be observed. In fact all the distinct periods of Bampur II-IV appear in Yahya IVC. Thus Yahya IVC, Shahr-i-sokhta III, Bampur II-IV, Shah-dad and Tal-i-Iblis 5 share a ceramic tradition. Period IVB saw three building phases, the lowermost being on the radio-carbon tests 3280±180 B.C. and 3245±465. From this level (IVB) were recovered 1000 fragments of steatite, both carved and plain bowls, beads, seals, buttons etc. Curvilinear and geometric designs, architectural designs and human and animal figures are all readily paralleled at Ur, Ubaid, Tell Asmar, Mari, Khafaje, Mohenjo-daro, Bampur. Thus the local production of the bowls, with the raw material dug out from a large steatite quarry 25 km from Yahya, began around B.C. 3000 arriving in Mesopotamia by Early Dynastic II if not earlier. Carved steatite bowls have not been recovered from Period IVC and are rare in the lowermost phase of IVB becoming very common in the later phases of IVB (B.C.3000-B.C.2400).[141a] Shah-dad tomb vessels (about 25) are exactly paralleled in IVB corpus. Traces of fire have been noted at the end of the period.

Thus it appears that Yahya IVC can be equated with earlier phases of Bampur viz. II-IV whereas Yahya IVB may be contemporary with Bampur V and VI materials and Yahya IVC shares the same ceramic tradition. As has been seen above, there is evidence in Bampur about the change in the pottery tradition in the late IV period and tradition reflected in Period V-VI is definitely different. In Period V the pipal motif makes its appearance. Yahya IVC incorporates all the shapes illustrated in the Bampur sequence II-IV and Yahya IVB, from Bampur V-VI. Progress Report I of Tepe Yahya and B. de Cardi's latest work on Bampur (1970), are not available to me, to show exact parallels and also to judge the extent of Harappan influence as it seems to be evident in Bampur V & VI. Also the so-called Proto-Elamite tablets may be able to throw some light on the ethnic affiliations of the people. But if all the material from Bampur V & VI is incorporated, then it may be assumed that the foreign influence had arrived in Tepe Yahya between 3000-2500 B.C. This can be easily questioned on the basis of the Proto-Elamite script used by the settlers. Was there really the arrival of Harappan power from the east? Or, was Yahya settlement developing into an urban centre on its

own? As it appears the Yahya culture of Period V was superimposed by the Proto-Elamite culture of IVC. Roughly speaking, the whole of Bampur II-IV is found paralleled in Yahya IVC means that they had sufficient contacts with each other, in fact Bampur II-IV might have owed its existence to the base at Yahya IVC. Although there is a slight time lag in the change coming over the two places, it may roughly be said that a change at Bampur was paralleled by a change at Tepe Yahya too. If the time lag is treated more seriously, a movement from the east towards the west can be easily perceived, with the assumption that the two settlements were ruled by the same ruler. That may explain the simultaneous change. Now this ruler or chief, however he may be called, was probably from Elam which will explain the use of Proto-Elamite script and probably also the language. This is how it is possible to account for the Proto-Elamite tablets. Secondly, it is evident from Lamberg-Karlovsky's discussion about the steatite vases that the vases found on other sites were probably products of Tepe Yahya which would imply trade contacts between sites as also a certain market at the other sites. Amongst these sites fall Bampur and Mohenjo-daro. Thirdly, the contacts with Mesopotamia have been principally dated to Early Dynastic III with a few pieces going back to Early Dynastic II (i.e. between B.C. 2600-B.C. 2450), whereas the contacts with Harappan civilization may be dated about early 2nd quarter of IIIrd millennium B.C. and Nal had contacts with Tepe Yahya even earlier in Period V. In the report published in 1972, a Harappan sealing has been reported from Period IVA. The radio-carbon date for the construction of IVA is 1610±110 B.C.

The change at Tepe Yahya that has come over may be identified with the indications of fire found in lowermost building stratum of IVB and in general an overall change is noticeable in the building technique, the size of the brick,[142] orientation of the building. The fire that preceded this change burnt the walls, and several jars containing charred grains were found. The burnt reed matting of the floor suggests that the building came to an end with fire. It is not clear from the limited data at my disposal whether the whole settlement suffered similar loss or not. But, as has been noted by the excavator, there is difference in the early and later phases of IVB. As for example though steatite objects are recovered from all periods of Yahya, the carved steatite bowls are not found in Period IVC and are still rare in early phase of IVB. However, they become common in the later phases of Period IVB i.e. according to the latest chronology offered by the excavator between B.C. 2700 to B.C. 2500. The increase in production may be attributed to certain changes after the fire. If the pipal-leaf motif is present amongst the decorations as it may appear from the correspondence of Yahya Late IVC and early IVB with Bampur V & VI, one can attribute the change to the presence of Harappans and probably improvement in tools and organization introduced by them, besides the ready market, improved system of transportation, in fact a

whole series of changes, presupposing a more advanced state of civilization than was found earlier at Tepe Yahya. However, the pipal-leaf is not found (till 1972). There are indications that the new incentive had come from an unidentified source.

The cultural similarities with that of Harappa may also be noted here. The seals found at Yahya IVB may supply more data about the Harappan influence in this region. A cylinder seal[143] on which a god and a goddess with horns carved on their head and another[144] bearing an eagle with spread wings are probably the most significant of the seals. In the first seal, the goddess on the left is shown as a female with breasts, long hair flowing down the shoulders. On her two sides two vertical standards (?) can be seen the nature of which is difficult to guess. The god is quite clearly a male with hair falling on the shoulders. Around him are depicted the heads of corn as if issuing from his body. He does not have the horned head-dress like the goddess. The heads of corn suggest a relation with agriculture and fertility and are reminiscent of the image of the god on the gypsum plaque found under the temple of Ashur.[145] The concept as reflected in the depiction appears to be the same. In the Indus valley the male divinity is not only associated with vegetation but also wears a horned head-dress. The goddesses too have similar head-dress. The othar seal that is reported from Period IVB is described by Lamberg-Karlovsky as 'our third piece is without parallel, but for a rather similar eagle incised on a steatite shaft-hole axe from Yahya'. This is the seal of the incised eagle, a stylized form of which has been reported from Harappa. Curiously enough there too it is unique. The position of the eagles along the vertical axis is the same in both the pieces (Plates 6, 7, 8). Another point worth noting is that both the Periods IVB and IVC are called Proto-Elamite by the excavator in the report of 1971. However, in the course of the report, Proto-Elamite tablets, some with writing and a pile of blank ones are said to have been found in levels of IVC whereas nothing is said about Period IVB. In Period IVA potter's marks of 19 distinctive classes and a Harappan sealing are reported. If this is really so, then it would be necessary to account for the causes of the sudden disappearance of writing which may be, for all one knows, the presence of the foreigners on the site and their control over the organization. In case the Proto-Elamite tablets are not found in Period IVB, then one may look for a substitute. The question which needs to be answered here is: what has happened to the Proto-Elamite script which was in use in the earlier Period IVC? The appearance of the Harappan sherd and disappearance of the Proto-Elamite tablets are someway interlinked. To the presence of Harappans in this region may be attributed the cylinder seal and the eagle seal which are typical. There is a time lag between Period IV & III. The uppermost level of construction of Period IVA beneath which the Harappan sealing was found, if the identification is correct, is dated 1610±110 B.C. which is followed by a break in the occupation for five

centuries or so after which starts period III. Period III of the excavator described as Iron Age falls between 1000 B.C.-500 B.C. This is exactly the time of the destruction of the Indus civilization in India (i.e. end of period IV). The fact that the settlement could not survive on its own may speak of its dependence on the vital support it was receiving from the Indus settlements. This may be of economic or political nature.

The change in the trade route, from overland to sea, need not affect the production. Since the production had been affected, some vital changes, besides the change in trade route, had taken place. The organisation needed for the production of steatite vessels as well as the market no more existed. About the role of the Tepe Yahya settlement in the genesis of Indus culture, not much could be said at this stage. The virgin soil had not been reached at the important sites like Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. There are reasons to think that when this is done, the date of the Indus civilization may be pushed backwards considerably.

Shahr-i-sokhta excavated by M. Tosi[146] for several seasons yielded parallels to Yahya IVB pottery continuous from IVC.[147] Shahr-i-sokhta has some parallels in Harappan shapes too in strata II-IV[148] (surface collection). Yahya IVC as has been seen above has parallels at Bampur II-IV. Although Tosi is prepared to consider Mundigak III-IV and Bampur I-IV as 'expressions of the same historical phenomenon: the identity of much of their material culture, in fact, connects them both directly to the same cultural process',[149] he considers the problem of affinities of Bampur to the Indus valley an open one as the data collected is thought to be too small. It seems that though it is correct that Bampur and Mundigak are correlated, the position of the correspondences is slightly different i.e. Mundigak III corresponds with Bampur I-III and early phases of IV, and Mundigak IV corresponds with Bampur late IV, V. However, the unmistakable indications are there. Now if Mundigak III-IV has parallels in Bampur I-IV which has in turn parallels in Yahya IVC, then naturally Shahr-i-sokhta strata II-III will have parallels with Mundigak IV.1 and IV.2,3 which are recognised as having been influenced by Harappan culture. Shahr-i-sokhta may also be said to have certain indirect Harappan influence. In fact, a network of Harappan affinities and influence can be perceived.

Shahr-i-sokhta II-III corresponds with Mundigak IV.
Mundigak IV corresponds with Bampur late IV-V.
Mundigak III corresponds with Bampur I-III.
Bampur V-VI corresponds with Yahya late IVC and IVB.

The sites seem to be interrelated. Bampur, Yahya and Mundigak seem to have affinities whereas Shahr-i-sokhta and Mundigak have affinities, with Mundigak as the point of bifurcation.

The chronological equation set up by Tosi is:

Bampur I-IV = Shahr-i-sokhta II-III
Bampur V-VI = Shahr-i-sokhta IV
= Mundigak IV,3

This was offered in 1970, whereas in 1969 he seemed to resist the comparison between Shahr-i-sokhta and Bampur. Now in the chronology offered by him certain relationship with Harappan civilization was evident. Bampur is linked with Mundigak by Tosi and he observes about Shahr-i-sokhta and Mundigak: 'The cultural identity of Shahr-i-sokhta I-III and Mundigak III-IV leads us to frame the hypothesis that there was a common political control over the two centres or over the whole of the middle and lower course of the Hilmand.'[150] In fact it seems that there might have been a common bond between these two settlements. Just as after Bampur was taken, Yahya was not difficult; in the same manner after Mundigak was taken, Shahr-i-sokhta also yielded because the relationship between these settlements was probably not different than that between Bampur and Tepe Yahya. A certain interdependence is noted in the weakening of the other settlement after the fall of the first. Mundigak IV shows many traces of Harappan influence. The points of contact between the Harappan religious practices and those of Shahr-i-sokhta also indicate possibilities of relationship as they do with Mundigak III-IV, especially notable being the female figurines[151] and the male head on a truncated cone-shaped base[152] in essence though not in form. The ox (*bos indicus*) figurines are also common. Among the non-religious objects may be counted the terracotta cakes of uncertain use and the probable existence of a drainage system (in the surface level).[153] Although there it is called 'urban system', the description resembles to that found on large scale in Sindh on the Harappan sites.

Two archaeologists D. Schmandt and C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky have made a study of the material collected by Stein at Bampur and preserved at the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. The conclusions they try to draw from their study of the typology of the ceramics are very different from those of B. de Cardi. They think that Period V shows a clear oriental influence that can be linked with the expansion of the Indus civilization along the Makran coast and that disappears in later period VI to be replaced by a complex of Hissar III type, characterized by the presence of polished ceramics. The authors claim to have collected enough elements from their study to be able to postulate the hypothesis of the arrival of new peoples from Iran at the end of Period V. This is how M. Tosi summarises it.[154] The hypothesis of the two authors seems to be probable especially when two motifs viz. the pipal-leaf and coil are considered. The former is peculiar to Harappan culture whereas the latter is common to both east and west (of Bampur).[155]

Actually the coil motif as has been noted by Tosi[156] appears in all the levels of Bampur and only in some levels of Shahr-i-sokhta, there is probably no reason to be disturbed about. The local tradition might have owed it to the western influence. This motif is not lacking on Harappan pottery. In fact there is no necessity to give too much importance to it, as it seems to be a common heritage. In this connection, it may be observed that the region between the Tigris-Euphrates and the Indus may be treated as a cultural belt. Even the Asuras might have come from the land of two rivers or further west and settled on the banks of the Indus. It was not an accident or sense of adventure that brought them. It was simply a deliberate choice of a region which was similar to that with which they were familiar. In fact if Harappa is really the older of the two cities the location of Harappa might probably be comparable to that of Assur on the Tigris. The geographical position of Tepe Yahya, Bampur and Shahr-i-sokhta, especially the first two sites is nearer to the west than to the Indus valley. Therefore, it is likely that cultural traditions akin to the west may be obtained there.

There are indications that Shahr-i-sokhta IV and latest phase of Bampur IV had to be abandoned. As B. de Cardi reports it 'a large jar and several small pots left in situ on the floor inside Room E suggested that the occupants had been forced to abandon both their possessions and their home. Whether they fled from invaders is not apparent, for neither of the cuttings gave any indication that Bampur had been sacked, but new wares, introduced at the end of Period IV show that alien folk had arrived in the locality.'[157] In the case of Shahr-i-sokhta the palace was burnt in Period IV and according to Tosi, the pottery of Period IV is identical in form and polish to the types of Bampur V-VI. A few paragraphs above this, he has said: "Fast wheel is introduced and the pottery forms grow more graceful, while traditional painted decoration disappears and is replaced by burnishing."[158] In 1970, Tosi has identified Shahr-i-sokhta IV with Bampur V-VI. Shahr-i-sokhta IV concludes with the destruction of the palace, and probably of the entire settlement. Period IV had also seen the laying out of imposing building of the palace. Actually, as has been noted above, the contacts with the Harappan civilization start already in Period II and III and in fact the standardization, 'an orderly growth of agricultural communities inserted into a process of urbanization and by now very near its most advanced stages' may be attributed to a peaceful integration of the Harappans into this community. The presence of the terracotta figurines of bull,[159] an animal associated with the god Asura, testifying the cult affinities with the Harappans, the fertility cult in the form of mother goddesses and on the pottery a solar-motif[160] and the male (?) head on a truncated cone shaped base—all these seem to have correspondences in the Harappan collection, beside the architectural details noted above. From all this it seems probable that if Bampur V reflects Harappan

influence after a violent conversion, Shahr-i-sokhta II-IV reflects Harappan penetration, peacefully and willingly accepted. The end of the latter settlement came through fire and the name given to the mound viz. the burnt city is reminiscent of the remote events. Probably this may be correlated to the absence of the pipal leaf motif at this site, whereas in Bampur where the settlement was destroyed at the beginning of Period V in which the Harappan influence begins is preceded by traces of fire. Yahya IVB probably in its early stages when the steatite vessels were still rare had also suffered a similar fire. However, mature Harappan pottery is not found at Yahya at all. But since there are correspondences with Bampur and Shahr-i-sokhta, they may be typological.

The Russian archaeologists working on the mounds in Southern Turkmenistan at Namazga Tepe, Altin depe, Geoksyur, Kara depe and Ulug depe have been able to establish a correlated sequence from early bronze age (Namazga IV) B.C. 2500-B.C. 2199 to later bronze age (Namazga VI). The traces of urban revolution are noticed in middle Bronze Age period and called Namazga V. "The whole group of phenomena including large settlement centres, the creation of specialist crafts, the development of new styles of cult figurines, the spread of seals—all indicate the appearance of new elements destined to play a part in the development of the new phase."[161] Later in the course of the article Masson has tried to trace the contacts of the Middle Bronze Age with the external world. Besides a grey ware jug found in Altin depe, probably a product of Hissar or elsewhere in north Iran, he has also found in the same hoard articles of ivory including three rods with circles depicted on the sides. He traces these objects back to Mohenjo-daro. "Besides these objects imported directly from the Indus valley, appreciable influence from the Harappa culture may be observed in many objects of Namazga V period."[162] Amongst the objects and influences following are mentioned: South Turkmenian flat dagger blades without a mid-rib widespread in India, handled pan found in Altin depe; pottery forms on pedestals common in the late Namazga V period, cylindrical perforated vessels; knife with concave back and convex edge, concave sickle, chisels of rectangular cross-section, finger-ring and bangle, surgical rod with two bud-shaped ends, articles of toilet with forked end; well-modelled unbaked terracotta bull-figurines; the spindle whorls, cones, discs, beads, etc.; the seals with different motifs some of which have correspondences in Harappa: a seal with the shape of an eagle with spread out wings;[163] the three-headed beast which makes its appearance for the first time: the Harappan variant with the body of a bull or the body of a rhinoceros whereas in Altin depe the body of a feline is supported by the head of a bird of prey, perhaps an eagle; the swastika symbol in the Indian fashion (i.e. with anticlockwise arms). This conglomeration of articles range from the tools and weapons of workers and warriors to articles of toilet and ornaments and religious symbols. Evidently the influence of the Harappans

embraced practically all walks of life. The occurrence of the pipal-leaf motif is not noted as also the details of the transitional phase from one period to another are not available to me. However, in spite of the apparent Harappan influence, it is difficult to identify the settlements as Harappan.

The social and material changes from one period to another have been noted by archaeologists between late Namazga IV and V phases, though without any accompanying traces of violence. This might suggest a peaceful introduction of the social and technical changes, brought in by the Harappans which might explain the absence of the pipal-leaf motif.

The last phases of various settlements in this region also display a certain contemporaneity. At Altin-depe, Namazga VI phase, the settlement falls into complete decline. In late Namazga V phase houses were deserted and the site was a victim of negligence. At Namazga-depe the settlement became limited to the big mound, in the northern part, known as 'Tower Hill'. The people were obviously on the defensive. The radiocarbon date from the latest Namazga-depe, Namazga VI phase is 1030 ± 60 B.C. which appears to be rather late.

Pottery manufacture is on decline, the shapes are limited, worse and clumsy. In late bronze age even hand-made pottery increases. The changed conditions could be connected with the deterioration of Harappan cities, Mundigak, Tepe Hissar from North Iran, as has been rightly pointed out by the excavator.[164] This decline, of course, can be attributed to the destruction caused by the Aryan invading hordes which were probably proceeding to India leaving behind them the trail of destruction. But the reasons for their not being able to revive themselves after the hordes had passed and to reorganise into the prosperous group that they were may be sought in the absence of the support which they enjoyed in the earlier times. The Harappans here also had dominated the scene. Probably with a view to increasing their prosperity and trade and also political influence, they had supplied the locality with advanced social organization and technology. Although it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the influence the Harappans wielded over these settlements, it seems that the presence of the Harappans in these areas has been vital to the economic and technological development and the creation of necessary organization for the fulfilment of the economic aims. Practically with each settlement some special product was associated. For example, Tepe Yahya produced and exported the steatite vessels. The Harappans may have played a vital role in starting the process of urbanization in these areas. They might have done this to exploit the locally available raw material by supplying it with the necessary tools, incentives for innovations, market outside the land and of course the necessary vision and imagination of the civilized man. As has been

suggested by Tosi, it seems possible that the Harappans constituted the political authority without which it is difficult to envisage such a role. This may also explain why these settlements could not revive themselves to anywhere near their previous state after the fall of the Harappans. The central authority and all the other benefits that accrued from it were simply not there.

This region was possibly under the influence, which was more than mere trade contacts, of the Harappans and probably amounted to a direct intervention by them. More excavations might bring to light settlements lying on the western regions relating to these. This region was in the Asura scheme, which was later adopted by the Aryans, known as *div*, sky. This does not of course mean that the very word *div* was its name. This was possible only because this region was nearer to the original home of the Asuras, or the original temple of Ashur on the Tigris. The Asuras may have come from the land of the two rivers.

23. Conclusion

This almost completes the whole pattern in which the cosmic order and the moral order were interwoven, and man became part of the universe, and the universe too came into man's life.

As far as Ṛgveda is concerned, the problems do not finish here. It is evident that at least parts of Ṛgveda are probably pre-Aryan. This does not imply that they existed in the same language before. They were composed by the ancient sages in their own language. Amongst such hymns may be counted those addressed to Uṣas, to Agni, to Varuṇa, the cosmogonic hymns, those addressed to Gandharva and so on. It is possible to make such a distinction. The references to sacrifices need not hinder such a distinction as the concept of sacrifice was interwoven with the fabric of daily life as an outcome of the concept of *ṛta* and also because it was probably taken over from the Asuras. In fact, what happened might be broadly summarised as follows: The Aryans before coming here heard of the prosperity of the land of Saptasindhus. They lived in a region which probably was not very far from Assyria, from where the Asuras hailed. This is the reason why the Asuras are constantly being called cousins in the Brāhmaṇas. That the Aryans were conscious of the destination they set themselves to becomes evident from the fact that they did not try to settle down in the sites they destroyed. After their arrival in India, for a long time they did not succeed in entering the Harappan region. Instead, one defeat followed another until the Asuras granted them an area they could live in. But here too they were constantly harassed by the Asuras and the Rakṣas. Gradually they evolved a strategy with the help of Viṣṇu who under cover of disguise wandered in all directions in the Indo-Gangetic plain trying to find out the weak points of the Asuras. The

strategy agreed upon seems to be like this: It was decided to make full use of the discontent amongst the Asuras, to assist those allies of Asuras who ask for assistance to settle the feuds between them and to take the help of those Asuras who are prepared to fight against Varuṇa and his government. Personal greed was the most important factor and a reward was enough to change the loyalties of the discontented ones. After having done this they proceeded to get the control over the dam with which they could paralyse the system through untimely floods. By now the Asuras had realised the course of events. The treachery of the officials like Uśanā Kavi and the desertion by the allies like the Maruts created a sense of demoralisation, prostration, and utter desperation. No amount of fighting on the part of the Rakṣas could remove this. At this stage probably Varuṇa decided to surrender along with all his officials. However, some of them like Sūrya, Mitra and others could not get reconciled to this idea and probably left the Indus valley and disappeared in the western mountainous terrain. When the Aryans perceived that the Asuras were escaping from the north, they started blocking their way with fire. Also they used the technique of creating sudden panic by putting fire to houses and thereby tried to evict the non-Aryans who were still lingering behind in the ruins of their houses. Thus they made them vacate the Indus valley. The pattern of dispersal of the Asuras appears to be like this: A large part went to Iran and the hilly regions of Baluchistan. Piśācas took shelter in the hilly region in the north-west. Some went via sea to Kaccha and Saurashtra. Others especially the Dāsas went to the eastern region. Some Rakṣas probably stayed on in Baluchistan and some went to southern India, probably to Ceylon. The Gandharvas and the Yakṣas found a place in the Aryan social structure. For a long time, the Asuras did not disappear altogether from the Indian scene. Even in Mahābhārata the wars between the Asuras and others are depicted. The events described in Ṛgveda seem to have taken place actually. Although this is shown above with the help of archaeological data, it is still necessary to investigate several other events which are described there. The approach demonstrated here may be applicable to the major part of Ṛgveda.

The creation of myths out of the events which actually took place was a work of later generations which decided to commemorate the victory on a grand scale by making it the basis of their religion and social structure. They had observed the prosperity of the Asuras which was attributed to their settled life and agriculture, to the worship of fire and to the concept of the god Asura fighting the evil forces to save his creation. Asura as sun-god was associated with light and the forces of evil, with darkness. As a natural corollary to this, the Ādityas i.e. functionaries as representatives of cosmic order on earth were associated with light and in later tradition are known as the various names of the sun. The relations of the Ādityas with the different aspects of sun pointed out above find further support in the later tradition. In fact, the sovereignty as such was

said to be brilliant. As is said in ṚV I.136.3: 'The light-rich Aditi, the holder of the peoples, sunny, stays on both the sides day after day, waking up (early) day after day. They have attained the light-rich sovereignty, both Ādityas, the (heavenly) gift of the lords. Under them is Mitra, is Varuṇa who unites the men, is Aryaman who unites the men.' Aditi was probably the sky where all natural phenomena are thought to be born and as such the priestess of the mother-goddess might have represented the sky and also probably gave the male children who were called Ādityas, the functionaries.

The Aryans while creating a religion accepted the time-hallowed symbolism of forces of good being represented by light and forces of evil represented by darkness. But they introduced an important change. For them they themselves were the forces of light and the Asuras represented the forces of evil. Having brought about this change, their struggle for the capture of this land turned into a struggle between the forces of good and evil. Further, because they thought that the Asuras owed their prosperity to their worship of the fire, they also adopted it and instituted the sacrifices which were probably based on the Asura concept of sacrifice. But once again some new sacrifices were introduced on the basis of the events which have taken place during the *devāsura* conflict. Thus the sacrifice itself came to celebrate the victory of the Aryans over the Asuras and symbolically of the forces of Good over those of Evil. In fact, the latter theme must have been fundamental to the Asura-concept of sacrifice as that constituted the basic theme of the cosmogonic myth.

The deification of those who participated in the struggle was probably completed before 1380 B.C., when we find the mention of Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra and Nāsatyas in the treatises of Mitannian kings. The principle followed here was that those who had surrendered or assisted the Aryan advance and interests from the beginning were treated as friends. Those functionaries of the Asura-empire who stayed in India after their defeat were also deified because they accepted the Aryan domination. Those who resisted initially but yielded at a later stage were given the status of semi-divine beings. Those who resisted till the end and were defeated came to represent the forces of evil. Thus the scheme becomes complete. In the celestial hierarchy of the later days Indra is the supreme king of gods, and Varuṇa and other Ādityas function under his sovereignty. The Gandharvas and the Yakṣas are the semi-divine beings in the service of these gods. The Asuras, the Rakṣas represented the forces of evil. The fate of the Piśācas, the Vetālas and others was even worse: they came to occupy the world of the dead. Thus this came to represent the Aryan cosmology. The gods lived in the sky, full of light. Their attempts to reach for the heaven, forcibly and unlawfully occupied by the Asuras and the Rakṣas, were depicted in a series of wars waged against them. The moral drawn was that the gods succeeded in the struggle because they were truthful and good. The defeat of the Asuras was due to their allegi-

ance to evil, immoral and untruthful behaviour. They lived in the nether-world, called Pātāla. This became the cosmogonic myth.

On the social plane the organization created was like this. The priestly Aryans who created the sacrificial system whose scriptures were the Brāhmaṇas and as those who had access to the gods were given the first place in the social hierarchy. The second place was occupied by those who ruled and protected the land, that is the ruling class. The ordinary Aryan came to occupy the third place called *Vaiśya*, i.e. the descendants of *viśa*, clan. All those ordinary people who were artisans, craftsmen, farmers and other occupational groups comprised the fourth group called the *Śūdras*. Those who fought with the Aryans and refused to accept the Aryan domination were outcastes. Racial purity was ensured through the strict rules of endogamy and denial of social status to the progeny of mixed marriages.

The religion created by the Aryans out of the wars waged against Asuras was open to the upper three *varṇas* (divisions) whereas it was denied to the fourth one. This was probably thought essential for the stability of the society comprising of the Aryans and the non-Aryans. The *Śūdras* were especially debarred from the practice of Vedic religion. This was not so much for preserving the purity or the monopoly as for the fear which constantly haunted the Aryan mind and of which it could never be free, viz. the revolt of the non-Aryans leading to their (Aryan) expulsion from this land. Thus the *Śūdra* was prohibited even from listening to the Vedic literature simply because if he understood the basis of this religion he might rebel, jeopardising the social peace. Secondly, if he understood the dirty trick that was played on him, i.e. the borrowal of the Asura lore and its transformation into an Aryan religion, he may once again be reminded of his past glory. Further this also might have served to subjugate these people and to create a distance between them and the other privileged classes so that their services can always be commanded. But their inclusion within the caste-system was necessary because the society could not survive without their specialised skills. The Aryan domination was accepted socially. However, the momentum created by this began to be checked very soon by the non-Aryan practices which surely survived amongst the *Śūdras* and the outcastes and the first such attempt may be found in the rise of the phenomenon of the Buddha and the religion he preached. It seems that the approach of Buddhism to the problem of death represents an ancient tradition based on the meditational exercises along with a certain world-view. In this sense Buddha truly preached an ancient doctrine probably in a more systematised form and providing it with institutionalised set-up. This was the first time after the fall of Harappan empire the impact of non-Aryan tradition was making itself felt. In fact, the Buddha's rebellion against the sacrificial system, his rejection of the caste-system, his use of the meditational exercises to defy

death and his use of the local language as the medium of communication marks a deliberate rejection of the growing Aryan religion and social structure. The first challenge ever posed to the Aryan social structure and religion was by Buddhism, and in fact it continued to be so as long as it existed in India. Hinduism was always terrified of Buddhism for the immense popularity it enjoyed.

The hypothesis put forth in the above pages is undoubtedly going to raise many problems. It is of course impossible to foresee all. But it is true that at last in some areas of knowledge, a certain amount of rethinking may be called for. It is not my aim here to try to indicate those areas or the lines along which the rethinking might be done in future. However, discussion of certain problems seems to be unavoidable.

The first problem is that of the chronology of Ṛgveda. I do not pretend to have the professional competence for this highly developed subject. However, in the light of the approach that is demonstrated in these pages, some observations are made. Roughly speaking, the present position may be summarised as follows: Maṇḍalas II-VII are said to be the oldest stratum of Ṛgveda and the rest later. On the basis of the above approach it seems plausible that some hymns of Ṛgveda, especially those addressed purely to the natural phenomena, Agni, Soma and some functionaries might belong to the oldest stratum. Those which narrate actual events of the *devāsura* conflict may form the second stratum. In this stratum may also be included the praises of Indra, Viṣṇu and Agni which narrate their great deeds. The rest may form the latest stratum. As has been shown above, most of the poets were the seven seers and were originally the Asura priests of fire. This means that they were pre-Aryan. The legitimate question is: How did these pre-Aryans compose the hymns in Sanskrit? Their language was not obviously Sanskrit. The course of events leading to this result may be as follows: The oldest stratum addressed to the natural phenomena and functionary probably already existed in the language of the Asuras before the advent of Aryans in India. These hymns may have existed as prayers to these phenomena-functionaries in the families of the priests, and handed down to later generation. They were probably at a later stage either translated into Sanskrit or on the basis of earlier material new hymns were composed. Because of this many foreign words which had no Sanskrit equivalents were borrowed into Sanskrit.[165] Later on when new words were coined in place of these borrowed words, their meaning (i.e. of borrowed words) was forgotten and these words became unintelligible to the Vedic priests themselves. This necessitated works like Nighaṇṭu which listed foreign and now obscure words and tried to explain the significance, sometimes genuine and sometimes imaginary. The tradition of Nighaṇṭus gives indications of a series of such works out of which the present Nighaṇṭu is but one. Even some of the hymns composed immediately after the defeat of the

Asuras, praising Indra, Indra-Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Indrāgni, agni may have been composed in this manner. But it is also possible that after spending a generation or two together, certain amount of bilingualism might have crept in, after which hymns might have been composed in Sanskrit itself. This change in the linguistic identity may have led to the change in racial and cultural identity too. As has been seen above, the Brāhmaṇas maintain that in his three steps Viṣṇu occupied first the three worlds, previously belonging to the Asuras, then the sacrifices and in the third step he deprived them of their speech. This last statement may be symbolic of large-scale borrowals of Asura and other languages by the Aryans. This will incidentally explain the large number of common words between Avesta and Ṛgveda. They might have originally formed the vocabulary of the Asura-language. All this means that at least the form of some of the hymns as they are known now might have been different, though the material out of which they are composed may be pretty ancient.

* * *

As far as Ṛgveda is concerned, the so-called mythological coverings can be removed by a method applicable practically all through Ṛgveda. This means that probably Ṛgveda was originally understood in this particular sense. What was probable becomes definite with the confirmation obtained from archaeological data. Thus Ṛgvedic hymns may be rendered as realistic accounts of the heroic deeds of Indra. That the literal sense creates a meaningful and coherent picture of the events may also testify the correctness of the method suggested.

The process through which the later generations transformed these events into a religion by injecting the element of magic and removing the relationship of cause and effect in their actions led to the creation of mythology under which the events were buried, although faint signs of it behind the rituals might have been perceptible to a discerning mind. This happened in the time of the Brāhmaṇas. However, there too no deliberate attempt to conceal the true meaning of the actions performed by way of rituals can be detected. The rituals were no doubt based on the events of the asura-deva conflict and in most cases the events were given as a background. The most important point in the transformation seems to be the adoption of the symbolism, originally associated with Asura, the god representing the good subduing the spirit of evil. This served to sever the bond with this world, lifting it to a superhuman plane. Thus the conflict which was seen as having taken place on the superhuman level, can only serve as the background for an act leading to magical result, and the events which were at the basis thus ceased to be a part of this world.

XIII

1. The affinities of the Asuras

ACCORDING to the literary evidence, there were five major peoples which inhabited the land of seven rivers, whereas the skeletal remains found at the Harappan sites display four ethnic types. A possible correspondence between the two types of data has been tried above. But the important issue at least to an archaeologist still remains untackled and that is of the origin of the peoples who built up the Harappan empire. It has been shown above that the Harappans were the five peoples: the Asuras, the Rakṣas, the Yakṣas, the Gandharvas and the Piśācas who built the Harappan empire as the Aryans found it on their arrival in the land of the seven rivers.

It is known that the Harappans, as the archaeologist would suggest, were not the first to inhabit the land. At least at four Harappan sites pre-Harappan settlements showing considerable degree of civilization have been excavated. Despite this, the Harappans had more advanced technology, agriculture and also a suitable social organization and probably were already acquainted with cities. The concept of town-planning was not new to them and script was already used by them. The superiority of Harappan culture over the pre-Harappan is undeniable. These points have been discussed above in Chapter X.7. There are indications that the people who brought all these things with them came from outside, and that they were the Asuras.

First, as far as the literary evidence is concerned, the greatest enemies of the Aryans are the Asuras whose god was called Asura. Ṛgveda, unhesitantly and unequivocally, calls the defeated people who had inhabited the land of the Sapta-sindhus by the name of Asuras. Secondly, as far as the skeletal remains are concerned, the type called Mediterranean or Caspian which is also found in the Indus valley is spread all over Western Asia and the coastal tracts of Europe. Thirdly, as has been discussed in Chapter II.2 God Ashur and the people who called themselves after the god as *Ashshuraiu* are also found in Western Asia. The concept of Asura is akin to that found amongst Assyrians. The defeat of the Asuras is referred to in ṚV I.131.1 by saying that Asura of the sky (*dyaur asura*) bows down

to Indra. Fourthly, the beginnings of an idea leading to its mature form as concept of *ṛta* as cosmic and moral law, can be traced backwards to the Mesopotamian idea of the cosmic state centring round the city god of which the functionaries of human state were the servants. Here the concept as found in the Ṛgvedic material is a fully developed one which is systematically applied to the concept of maintaining law and order on human plane and translated into social organization. The central point of the cosmos is thought to be the sun and Asura thus is the sun-god. The different phases from day-break to sunset are taken to be the seven stages of the cosmic order. In the human state these seven stages represent the seven Ādityas, the function of each one being closely related to the peculiarity of the phase represented by him. Thus he is both the divine natural-phenomenon on account of Asura being also the sun and the god and also the functionary of the human organization. Because the god fights the spirit of evil, functionaries and their human followers also become a part of this fight. They too fight evil on earth, which it is believed, will lead to the ultimate defeat of the evil by the god and also likewise by the human beings. This will bring into existence the rule of the good, the righteous. The Mesopotamian concept differs from this in that it was not always the sun who was the central nature god. There was the assembly of gods which was headed by the god of a given city state, the priest in the beginning being the human god. Gradually the functions of the priest and the king or leader exercising the political power became separated. But the gods expected explicit obedience from the human beings. In fact, mankind was created for serving the gods. This belief is not found in the Ṛgvedic material and the fact that the term *ṛta* means the cosmic and moral order implies that the cosmic order was conceived as separate from that on the earth, though both are integrated and interconnected. This essentially springs from the idea of man and the earth on which he lives are the creation of god and therefore the cosmic order is bound to be reflected on the earth as moral order. Thus although god and man are integral parts of universe, the relationship is not one of master and servant but of equality in which both are important and complementary to each other. Thus it is likely that the Asuras before their appearance in India were acquainted with the idea of cosmic order. Their chief god was sun-god and for the people who are so conscious of the phenomenon of sun as to think of it as their god, it is hard not to notice various stages through which the sun passes in an unfailing order. The culmination of this concept is found in creating an organization in which sun is represented by the central authority and the stages through which the sun passes represented by the officials assisting the central authority in maintaining the moral order. The other phenomena like wind, rain, etc. are thus secondary to the phenomenon of sun. The concept of *ṛta* is not found systematically developed to such an extent anywhere else.

Besides these, there are certain other elements which can be related

to the practices observed at Assur in Assyria. Among such elements may be counted the worship of the mother-goddess found in Ṛgveda under the name of Uṣas. Sidney Smith in his 'Early History of Assyria' has noted some religious practices peculiar to the Sumerians in Assyria and the Assyrians themselves. The first is the site of the temple, the earliest structure yet found in Assyria devoted to the worship of the goddess known under various names but always a form of Ishtar. She is at times known as "the Assyrian" (that is the goddess of the city of Assur), 'the Ninevite' 'the queen of the dawn' (lit. the lighting up) or Dinitu. The site might have been dedicated to the goddess which becomes apparent from the votive terracotta figurines. The building was destroyed by fire possibly at the hands of the enemies. But our cencern here is with the concept of the goddess which seems to be similar to that of Uṣas in ṚV. It has been already shown that Uṣas might have been a priestess of the goddess of the same name. The gypsum plaque with painted bas relief of a woman is said to represent the goddess Ishtar. If that is so, it displays similarities especially in decorative ornaments depicted on the plaques with the terracotta female figurines found on the Harappan sites. The main point of difference between the two depictions is the absence of head-dress in the case of Ishtar. A type of pot associated with this temple site is the so-called anthropomorphic vase, made of clay, the human features in the form of bosses having been stuck on to a four-legged vase. Smith has noted the frequent occurrences of such vases in Asia Minor as being indications of trade-contacts.

Besides the close resemblance between the natural phenomenon of dawn and the priestess Uṣas who represented it in the human existence on the one hand, and the goddess Ishtar on the other, there are some Hindu practices which seem to be related to the anthropomorphic pot found on the temple site and in fact may be of help to understand the function of these pots in the Assyrian set-up. The Hindus observe two festivals, both connected with mother-goddess as the presiding deity of fecundity in man and nature. The festivals are known as Navarātra, the Nine-nights and Gauri-pūjana, the worship of Gauri. Navarātra is held in the 7th month viz. Aśvina of the Hindu lunar calendar from the first day of the bright fortnight to the tenth day, and is widely celebrated in all parts of India. In Bengal, it is the most important festival and is known as Durgā-pūjā, the worship of (goddess) Durgā. In Mahārāshtra it is observed as follows: On the first day a vessel, or rather a water pot of the smaller variety is placed on the domestic altar. A garland of sesamum flowers which is held sacred for this occasion is hung on the pot vertically, followed by the usual pūjā-rituals. Simultaneously, a handful of wheat is sown in a basket and watered until it is fully grown in the next nine days. Every day the number of garlands is increased by one. On the tenth day the wheat-shoots and the flowers are offered to the goddess in the form of *ghaṭa*, vessel. This is clearly a fertility rite. The vessel probably has some relation

to the anthropomorphic vessel found in the Ishtar temple. In fact the placing of the vessel with water seems to symbolize the womb to which is made the offering of the garlands of yellow flowers, symbolic of the pouring of seed in the vessel. The planting of wheat in the basket simulates the vegetational fertility. In fact this festival might have demarcated the harvesting of the first crop and the ensuring of the fertility in the winter crop. Usually wheat is sown in India in the winter.

The second festival Gauri-pūjana is celebrated in the month of Bhādrapada i.e. in the 6th month of the Hindu lunar calendar for three days, 7th-9th of the bright fortnight. Without going into the mythological details, it may be noted that usually the goddess represented by her image upto her neck, without the torso and the legs, is worshipped in the family altar. On the day of Gauri-pūjana it is removed from there and placed on a water-pot (*kalaśa* or *ghaṭa* of the bigger type) and dressed in a saree and decorated with ornaments, etc. In fact the older generation women report having drawn human features on earthen pot and worshipped it. The introduction of brass-busts seems to be of recent date (see Plate 18). This goddess is treated as if she has returned from her husband's house to her parental home; she is first served a simple meal leading on to a feast. The ritual food is of specified varieties. The time of the festival is in rainy season and probably the offerings to the goddess are made in order to ensure fructification. The use of the circular pot as the lower part of the goddess' body is significant, the rotundity suggesting its relation with the womb with the grown foetus in it. In fact in the Harappan assemblage, the figurines of pregnant females are frequently recorded (Fig. 12 and Plate 19).

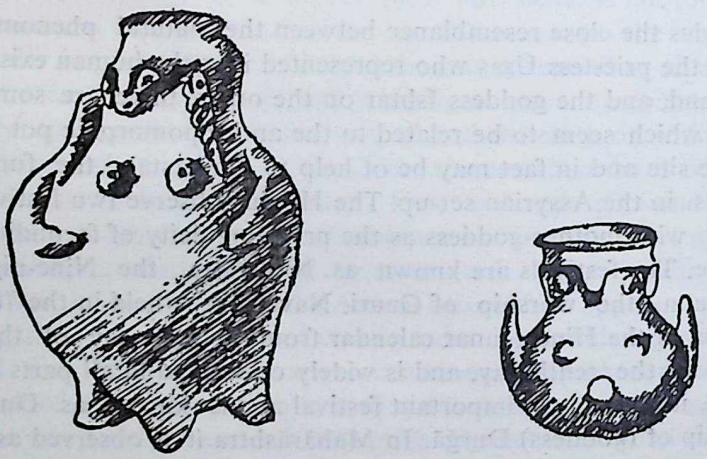

Fig. 12 The anthropomorphic pots from Assur

The third festival which might have been some way influenced by the practice of *ded* or *ṭeṭ* tree celebrating the new year is already referred to in Chapter II.2. There also a small pot is used.

The pot in the ritual context in general symbolised the womb, and especially the womb with the foetus. The anthropomorphic vessels combined both the aspects directly.

Yet another trait which might find parallel in pre-historic material culture of the Indus valley may be related to the god Ashur himself. A bas relief of the early Assyrian times depicting a god from whose body branches of trees are shooting forth is found at Assur. At the lower corners are two figures holding what look like vases from which streams of water shoot forth. At the above two corners are two animals who are eating the leaves of the branches. This divinity is identified as Ashur.[1] As has been shown above, the new year festival called *Guḍhī Paḍavā* of Hindus seems to be akin to the *ded* or *ṭeṭ* festival in Egypt and the custom of worshipping the tree-trunk in Assyria. The elements associated with Ashur in the bas-relief also seem to be not very far removed from those used in the festive banner the Hindus erect to welcome the new year. On the other hand, in the Indus valley the god is depicted in the pipal tree, as has been seen above and also as surrounded by the animals on all sides, which refers to the famous yogi seal. The god is conceived as the creative force behind the universe. The pots with water streaming forth from them also symbolise the creative force and the symbol probably survives in the later *pūrṇa-ghaṭa* which is also shown overflowing.

The data about the nature of the earliest stages of the Asura-civilization in India are still not available as the excavations both at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro have not reached the virgin soil. However, if the cross-dating with Tepe Yahya is correct, the earliest levels at these two sites may reveal material of considerable antiquity. The pattern of settlement in the early stages might have been those of the city-states gradually expanding over a vast area. Subject to further excavations, it may be observed that the Harappans before reaching the Indus valley already had a civilization advanced enough to introduce the urban revolution in the land of adoption. Amongst the specific traits as revealed in the excavations may be counted the script. G.R. Hunter in his analysis of the signs has remarked: 'Many of the signs bear a remarkable resemblance to the monumental script of Ancient Egypt. The entire body of the anthropomorphous signs have virtually exact Egyptian equivalents. It is interesting to note that not one of these anthropomorphous signs have the remotest parallel in Sumerian or Proto-Elamite. On the other hand, many of our signs are exactly paralleled in the Proto-Elamite and Jamdet Nasr tablets such as that have no conceivable morphographic equivalent in Egyptian.'[2] He adds further: 'One is bound to conclude that the presumption is strong that our script has been borrowed in part from Egypt and in part from Mesopotamia.'[3] In addition to this, the linguists have found in Ṛgveda words which might be traced back to the Egyptian, as for example *ibha*, elephant.[4] It probably means that the Ṛg-vedic word was a borrowal from the pre-Aryan languages which were in contact with the Egyptian at some earlier time, when the script was invented. Thus just as in the case of religious symbols and practices the Assyrians were influenced by the Egyptians so also was their language and script.

As far as the script is concerned, it makes its first appearance in India with the Harappans, who were in contact both with the Egyptians and the Proto-Elamites. As has been noted, some of the Proto-Elamite symbols and myths also have found their way into Harappans' life. All this presupposes a long contact, in fact, a long stay in these lands, long enough to be influenced by them and long enough to feel at home with them in order to borrow them.

Besides the anthropomorphous signs in the Indus script, the use of the writing material seems to be yet another point of contact with Egyptian. In Sumeria, and also in later Mesopotamia it was customary to write on clay tablets, whereas in Egypt papyrus was used for writing purposes. The clay tablets were baked after writing, in order to make them last and in fact they are the most valuable source of our information. However, no such tablets were found at the Indus sites, except the seals and sealings bearing short inscriptions. It is possible that some kind of perishable material was used for writing purposes which has not survived. This finds support in the later practice of writing on birch-bark or palm-leaf. The papyrus is not available in India, and this use of palm-leaf or some such material by the Harappans may be a good illustration of the intelligent use of locally available natural resources. The change in the medium was probably necessitated by the shapes of pictographs which also consisted of curves which are difficult to draw on clay.

Some traits which may find parallels in Sumerian culture are as follows: The hair of the stone statuette of a man found at Mohenjo-daro and presumably of late date are bound with a fillet. The upper lip is shaved with beard covering the chin. The eyes are narrowed and look almost half-closed. The nose is broken but may have been long; the lips are thick, forehead subnaturally low. The ears are conventionally rendered. A hole is bored on each side of the necklace. Across the left shoulder is a cloak carved in relief with trefoils which was originally filled with red paste. The trefoil pattern is found in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Crete in comparable associations. One of the eyes still had its shell-inlay when it was discovered. Wheeler has pointed out on the basis of the parallels in the regions mentioned above the 'religious and in particular an astral connotation for the motif'. It is possible that this was probably the representation of Asura, the sun-god or his human priestly representative. Several statues of males in different positions have been located at the Harappan sites.[5] The cultural traits depicted on the statuette may be analysed as follows: The fillet round the head which is also referred to in Ṛgveda as *kaparda* is a trait commonly found on the statuettes discovered in Mesopotamia, in 3rd and 2nd millennium B.C. which was probably used as a mark of distinction.[6] The other point is the manner in which the dress is shown on the figure. That is to say, the upper garment as it is shown covers the left shoulder leaving the right shoulder

bare. This manner of wearing the upper garment is paralleled in Sumer on the statue of Gudea, king of Lagash or possibly of his son Ur-Ningirsu,[7] and also in Assur in the temple precinct. The same style was later adopted by the Buddha in the formal dress to be worn by the Buddhist monk especially in meetings. As the Pali formula goes: *ekaṁsam uttarāsaṅgam kāretvā bhikkunām pāde vanditvā*, etc....i.e. having put the upper garment on the left shoulder, having bowed down to the (elder) monks etc. This custom of wearing the upper garment covering the left shoulder and leaving the right one bare later spread throughout the Buddhist world and is still current amongst the monks of various nationalities. However, until the exact age of the statue is known, it may merely indicate its knowledge outside India in Harappan days. The third contemporary practice reflected in this and other statuettes found on the Harappan site is the shaving of the upper lip while keeping a long beard. This again finds correspondence in some of the older practices as reflected in the styles depicted on statues. For example, on a gypsum statue of Ikushshamagan, king of Mari from the Ishtar temple of Mari c. 2900-2685 B.C. is found the long beard and the shaven upper lip.[8]

All this common heritage of the Asuras with the Egyptians and the Sumerians points to a possibility of their having been in close contact at one time. Since the Harappans brought many practices and beliefs to India and since these practices, even after the disappearance of the Harappans at least three thousand years ago, still survive as a part of the Hindu religion and culture, thus leaving an indelible mark, it may be concluded that the Asuras came to India from a region west of the Indus valley and even before their arrival here they were in contact with the Egyptians and Sumerians at a very early date so that they came to share certain religious practices and beliefs as well as some other cultural traits. These cultural traits remained with the Asuras, probably till their very end in India itself and have also left their mark on Indian culture in general. The traits distinguished them in the early stages of their life in this country as is seen at Kalibangan, and that is why the dominant element in what emerged and is called the Harappan culture is said to be the contribution of the Asuras. The fact that the early levels of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are still unexcavated need not hinder us as these traits have been found to dominate even in the later levels. They may have presumably existed in the earlier stages too.

As far as the date of the Asura arrival in the Indus valley is concerned, several solutions have been offered. Archaeologists are having second thoughts on the matter. In his review of Allchins' book, 'The Birth of Indian Civilization', Wheeler makes a plea for an earlier date of Harappan civilization: "The Sargonid period is now agreeably established at c. 2370-2280 B.C. and we know from a number of recent soundings (1964-66) that the occupation of Mohenjo-daro goes back to a very considerable way

below the levels at which the excavators have recovered materials recognisable on Sargonid sites in Mesopotamia. It may well be that the initial date (2500 B.C.) conjectured in 1946 for the Harappan civilization may yet have to be pushed further back by a century or two."[9] Even if Wheeler is prepared to push the date further back only by a century, the findings at Tepe Yahya might ask for a bigger change than that! If the chronology suggested by Lamberg-Karlovsky and also the foregoing discussion about the relations of Indus people with those of Tepe Yahya is correct, it may imply that the Harappans were already entrenched in the Indus valley by Tepe Yahya IVB which has been equated with Bampur V-VI and so on. Dated by the excavator as between 2500-3000 B.C., this in turn presupposes that they may have arrived in the Indus valley at least a century before. The excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro reaching the virgin soil can alone throw definite light on this problem. Until then the method of cross-dating has to be relied upon.

That the Asuras came from outside India is not as important as the type of civilization they created after adopting the land of the seven rivers as their country. They made full use of the natural environment and also integrated the local inhabitants into the social organization set up, thus creating a powerful polity based on stable foundation and having the potential which could be pressed into service for the needs of the expanding empire that we find towards the end. As V. Gordon Childe has put it: 'The delicate and, as we now see, enduring adaptation to the Indian environment represented in the Indus civilization, can only have been created and spread over a vast area after a long period of incubation on the spot.' This enduring adaptation in the beginning has created what is known later on as the Hindu culture and society, albeit with the twists given in the process of aryanization of all that existed. However, all that the Aryans have tried to suppress has asserted itself with vengeance and those practices religious and cultural known as Hindu might be traced to the Indus period. The Aryan religion of sacrifices has vanished but the Aryan social structure with all the rigidity of a degenerate system threatened with extinction holds on.

2. The denomination of Asura-empire

The name by which the Harappan empire was known to other countries in its hey-day and the name by which the Harappans called their own country is still an enigma, largely because the script is undeciphered. Several hypotheses have been put forth complicating the issue further. Attempts have been made to identify Meluḫḫa with the Indus valley on the basis of evidence available in Babylonian sources.[10] However, the Indian sources have not yielded any corroborative evidence beyond the famous Sanskrit word *mleccha* used by the Aryans. This word was acquired in India to denote, at least initially, a foreign unintelligible speech.

Mleccha first occurs in ŚB III.2.1.24. The passage beginning with III.2.1.18 narrates an episode, in a mythopoeic manner of the deprival of the speech of Asuras by the devas: "18. Now the devas and the Asuras both of them sprung from Prajāpati entered upon their father Prajāpati's inheritance; the devas inherited the mind and the Asuras, the speech. Thereby the devas inherited the sacrifice and the Asuras, the speech. The gods for yonder (heaven) and the Asuras for this (earth). 15. The devas said to sacrifice: 'That *vāc* (f. speech) is a woman, beckon her and she will certainly call thee to her'. Or it may be he himself thought that *vāc* is a woman: 'I will beckon her and she will certainly call me to her'. He accordingly beckoned her. She, however, at first disdained him from the distance.... He said, 'she has disdained me from the distance'. 20. They said, 'Do but beckon her reverend sir, and she will certainly call thee to her'. He beckoned her; but she only replied to him, as it were by shaking her head.... 21. They said, 'Do but beckon, reverend sir, and she will certainly call thee to her'. He beckoned her and he called him to her;.... 22. The devas reflected, 'That *vāc* being a woman we must take care least she should allure him'.—say to her 'come hither to me where I stand and report to us her having come. She then went up to where he was standing. 23. The gods then cut her off from the Asuras and having gained possession of her and enveloped her completely in fire, they offered her up as a holocaust, it being an offering of the gods. And in that they offered her with an *anuṣṭubh* verse, thereby they made her their own and the Asuras being deprived of speech were undone crying, he lavaḥ! he lavaḥ! 24. Such was the speech which they then uttered—and he who speaks thus is a mleccha (barbarian). Hence let no Brāhmaṇ speak barbarous languages, since such is the speech of the Asuras. Thus alone he deprives his spiteful enemies of speech and whatsoever knows this, his enemies, being deprived of speech are undone."[11]

The three elements in the episode are as follows: The struggle between the asuras and the devas, the asuras being deprived by the devas through a trick, and the use of fire in the destruction of *vāc*.

The general theme of the narrative viz. depriving the asuras of their language has been touched upon in the Viṣṇu-episode above. In the Brāhmaṇas, Viṣṇu is said to cover the speech of the asuras in the third step. In AiBr. I.27 Soma is exchanged for the *vāc* by the devas. *Vāc* afterwards returns to the devas. All three episodes dealing with a single theme seem to point to the same conclusion: that the devas somehow deprived the asuras or destroyed the language of the asuras. The burning of the language in the sacrificial fire may have different implications: It may indicate the destruction of the speakers of the language in fire, which was done before or it might indicate the burning of the written material and a subsequent ban on rewriting the compositions. The Viṣṇu-episode may indicate extensive borrowal. In case the written material had been burnt

by the devas, the lack of writings in the Indus valley may be automatically explained, for which there may, of course, be other reasons too. The other point to be noted is the ban put on the language of the asuras by the devas. The brāhmaṇas were not to speak this *mleccha* language which was the speech of the asuras. This was one of the ways, as the passage itself says, of undoing the asuras.

The term *mleccha* occurs here for the first time and may be considered an addition made here in India by the Aryans to their language. The point made towards the end of the passage is that those who speak like the Asuras are the *mlecchas*. In the Pali sources *milakkha*, *milakkhu*, *milaca* are equivalents of Skt. *mleccha*. But from the usage of the word milakkhu (as in Dīghanikāya III.264, Saṁyuttanikāya V.465, Vinaya III.28 etc.), it seems to be more a generic term used to describe all those who lived on the outskirts of the villages (*paccantimesu janapadesu paccājāyanti aviññātāresu milakkhesu* i.e. born on the outskirts of the janapada amongst the unknown *milakkhus*). Even in Pali the word seems to be a borrowed word, if the structure is an indication of anything. Thus both Sanskrit *mleccha* and Pali *milakkhu* etc. might have had another parent word for their basis. *Mleccha* is sanskritised whereas Pali probably retained a near-original form. The meaning of the original word may have referred to the population from the borderland, which was adopted by the Aryans (and probably from the language of the asuras themselves) and applied to those who spoke like Asuras: That is the similarity to the Asura-speech became the criterion for their being called mlecchas. Moreover it could apply to all those sections of population which owed its allegiance to the Asuras and were now eking out an existence as outcastes on the fringes of the society.

The etymology of the term *mleccha* (Skt.) and its Pali equivalent, *milakkhu*, is unknown. It is, however, not impossible that the terms were derived from a term *milk* (Phoenician), *malik* (Semitic) or *melek* (Hebrew). The term as discussed by Paton[11a] had a long history and an extensive use by many nations which explains the various forms. The original form of *milk* or *melek* is seen as *Milcom* which was the name of an Ammonite god. In Phoenician *milk* equivalent of Ammonite *Milcom* means 'king'. In Israel, *Milcom* was equal to *molech*, a god worshipped by Israelites. *Melek* as the divine name is found in all branches of the Semitic language. In Babylonia and Assyria it appears as *malik* and *melek* as a title and is frequently applied to the highest divinity. Paton rejects all the theories about Melek and thinks it probable that Melakīm of the Semitic races bore a family resemblance to each other just as the Baalim did. The latter were nature gods who were associated with trees, springs and streams. They gave the fruits of the earth, and were worshipped with first fruits. The Melakīm were tribal gods conceived like the human rulers. Child-sacrifice is the most conspicuous feature of Melakīm-cult. In Israel such a cult was associated

and this sort of sacrifice was also offered by the Canaanites, the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians, and it is possible that it existed also in the Ammonites associated with Milcom.

Thus probably *mleccha* may be derived from Akkadian divine name *malik*, *malkum* or *malikum* (Hebrew, *molech* and Phoenician, *milk*). The Pali versions *milakkhu* and *milaca* seem to be directly derived from *milk*. *Mleccha* might have been derived from a form similar to *molech* (Heb.). The Pali terms *milakkhu* and *milakka* bear close resemblance to the Phoenician form *milk*, king, but is also used as 'one of the commonest Phoenician divine names'. As has been seen already the asuras had definite Semitic affiliations. Originally the term may have meant the god but when a people like the Indo-Aryans used it to indicate the worshippers of Molech, and gradually to signify 'foreigners' until it came to cover all foreigners as such, irrespective of their true identity, it lost its original significance. It is not unlikely that the term *malik-milk-molech* was used as a title by the worshippers of the god which seems to have been a common custom amongst the Semitic peoples in which case it is not at all difficult to understand why they were called *mlecchas* by the Indo-Aryans.

This explanation of the term will throw light on the origin of two practices which are very widely condemned in modern days. First is the practice of child sacrifice as is reflected in the story of Śunaḥśepa,[11b] and the other is the existence of hierodules. Both these practices were an integral part of the Phoenician religion. As is noted above, the custom of child-sacrifice was associated with the god Milcom or Molech. With temples are associated a large number of staff like the high priest, prophets, servants, hierodules of both the sexes. Male hierodules were called *kelb*, dogs.[11c] Curiously enough in Mahārāshtra also a male attendant of the god Khaṇḍobā whose chief shrine is situated on a hill in Jejuri, not very far from Poona, is known as *vāghyā*, tiger and the female as *muraḷī*, later meaning a wandering woman (which is not supposed to be a decent epithet). The institution of devadāsi, female attendant of god, in southern India survived till recently.

It is possible to explain another term which has eluded understanding viz. '*helayo helayo*', attributed to the asuras when they were running away after the defeat. *Helayo* may be compared with Akkadian *ilum*, *elum*, god, divinity (or Phoenician *elyun elyun*, high is the father of all gods ?).[11d] It is not impossible that after the disaster, the people remembered the god in sheer desperation.

Thus in all probability the term mleccha (or molecca) originally indicated god and was later used to indicate people, who worshipped the god.

Now many Sumerologists and Assyriologists have tried to identify the geographical position of the region known as Meluḫḫa in the Akkadian and Babylonian records as an entrepot between Agade and Tilmun (modern Bahrein on the Persian Gulf). Various identifications from Nubia in Egypt[12] to the latest one by I.J. Gelb with 'the northern shore of Persian Gulf and of the Arabian sea, denoting Iran and India extending east of ancient Elam and Anshan upto and including the Indus valley',[13] have been offered. Besides this Meluḫḫa has been placed just beyond the borders of Baluchistan and extending a hundred miles beyond the town of Jask, where it might have had a common border with Makkan.[14] Gelb's view seems to present one difficulty and that is that Meluḫḫa or anything nearing it except mlecchа does not appear as a name of a country associated with the Asuras and other peoples mentioned in the ṚV and unless such a corroboration is found, the identification remains speculative. The location and the extent of Meluḫḫa suggested by Mallowan seems to complement the meaning of *milakkhu*, which might have been outside the pale of Indus influence and was probably a land of alien culture.

In the following discussion, a new line of investigation based on the evidence available in Cuneiform and Sanskrit sources is suggested. The new claimant for the ancient name of the Indus valley is Āraṭṭa. The Cuneiform source is the Sumerian epic of Enmerker and the lord of Aratta[15] and that of the Sanskrit, Mahābhārata. Enmerker ruled over Erech, a city-state in southern Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Far to the east of Erech, lay Aratta another city-state. It was separated from Erech by seven mountains. Enmerker was the son of Utu the sun-god, and Inanna was his sister. To her he makes a plea that the people of Aratta must build her a temple of gold, silver and lapis lazuli and timber in Erech. Let the people of Aratta submit to those of Erech.... Thus he wants to make Aratta a vassal of Erech. His messenger goes crossing the seven mountains and stands before the lord of Aratta, and conveys him the message of Enmerker. The epic ends victoriously for the lord of Aratta.

The first point to be noted is that geographically the country of Aratta is said to lie to the east beyond seven mountains which the messenger of Enmerker on his way to Aratta covered, travelling day and night, ascending and descending the mountains. The rest of the details are obscure. Considering the emphasis laid on the distance traversed by the messenger,[16] it will not be far-fetched to say that the poet wanted to convey the impression of the distance that lay between Erech and Aratta. Another significant geographical detail that is added in the latter part of the poem (Ibid, lines 570 ff) is the vicinity of a big river which could cause immense destruction. Besides this the lord of Aratta, when he hears the message of Enmerker threatening him with the destruction of the city unless the tribute is paid readily, refers to the patronage of Inanna. He says:

O herald, speak unto your king
The lord of Kullab and say unto him
Mé, the lord fit for the pure land,
She who is the royal...of heaven, the queen of heaven and earth,
The *mistress* of all the *mé*, the holy Inanna,
Has brought me to Aratta, the land of pure *mé*,...'[17]

In the last line he refers to his foreign origin and also calls him the protégee of the mother goddess. The advent of foreigners in the Indus valley, accompanied by conflagrations, introduction of a distinct pottery type and writing has been noted by the archaeologists. The difficulties of communication on account of a foreign language are not referred to, though in a poem of this nature, one does not expect to find such details. The common writing which they shared is referred to in the latter part of the epic.[18]

The epic is placed about 1700 B.C. whereas Enmerker is said to have lived around B.C. 3000.[19] Although not all the details of the epic can be treated as authentic facts, the geographical details seem to be realistic enough. To this may be added the belief in the cult of Inanna. As has been noted above mother-goddess cult is testified in the Indus valley, both in the archaeological and literary sources. The articles demanded as tribute gold, silver, lapis lazuli and timber were all available in the Indus valley and the surrounding areas.

Mahābhārata refers to Āraṭṭa in several places. The reference in Karṇaparva,[20] however, seems to be a detailed one. The material may be divided under three headings, viz. geographical position, social structuer and religious beliefs and practices.

The name of the country is said to be Āraṭṭa whereas the people were called the Bālhika. The geographical position of the country is described thus:

pañca nadyo vahanty etā yatra pīlūvanānyapi|
śatadruśca vipāśā ca tṛtīyerāvatī tathā
candrabhāgā vitastā ca sindhuṣaṣṭhā bahirgatāḥ||
āraṭṭa nāma te deśā...

'Where these five rivers, viz. Śatadru, Vipāśā, the third Irāvatī, Candrabhāgā and Vitastā flow and where there are pīlū-forests and (where) Sindhu is the sixth to flow out, this country is called *Āraṭṭa*...'[21]

Further,

pañca nadyo vahantyeta yatra niḥsṛtya parvatāt|
āraṭṭa nāma balhikā na teṣvaryo dvyahaṃ vaset||

'That (region) where these five rivers, emerging from the mountains flow, this Āraṭṭa (country) is called Bālhika where the Arya should not stay even for two days.'[22]

The third verse says:

āraṭṭā nāma te deśā bālhikā nāma te janāḥ|
vasātisindhusauvirā iti prāyo vikutsitāḥ||

'Āraṭṭa is the name of the country, Bālhika is the name of the people and are generally abused as Vasātis, Sindhus, and Sauviras.'[23]

All the three verses clearly define the geographical area which was called by the name Āraṭṭa. This was the region through which the six rivers flowed. Only six rivers are named here omitting the name of Sarasvatī the seventh, which together are referred to in the Ṛgveda as the *saptasindhavaḥ*, obviously because Sarasvatī became sacred to the Aryans as the saviour of Indra's life. The people of this country were called Bālhikas and were detested by the Aryans for unknown reasons. Any contact with these people was strictly forbidden to the Aryan, to the extent that he was not to spend even two days in this country and its people. That calling them as Vasāti, Sindhu or Sauvira was considered a term of abuse may imply that these names had already assumed derogatory significance and that collectively they were called Bālhikas. These three regions are identified as follows: Vasāti, Greek Ossadioi, were settled in the region of the confluence of the Chenab and Sutlej with the Indus, Sindhu, with Sindha-sāgar doab and Sauvīra, with upper Sindh.[24] Broadly speaking this covers the region of the Indus civilization in the Indian sub-continent, and it is obvious that even during the time of Mahābhārata, the differences in culture were predominant and the Aryan fear of cultural contamination alive, which means that the history was still not forgotten. Thus the country of Āraṭṭa may have covered the land of the five rivers, and the Sindhu.

The passage gives the impression that amongst the Bālhikas, the Aryan social structure which became a rule in the later days was not enforced and observed strictly. Thus it was not considered obligatory by the people to hold on to a single occupation. A Brahmin who visited this region found it to his dismay that "having become brahmin ones, a balhika becomes kṣatriya, then (he became) *vaiśya*, *śūdra* and even a barber. Having become barber, he again became a brahmin and having become a twice-born, he became a dāsa. In the same family one becomes brahmin and the rest followed other professions", and he concluded that 'Gandharas, Madrakas and Bālhikas are utterly thoughtless'. These probably are the impressions of a man who in his society was used to strict observance of caste system in which the caste of the person was decided by

his birth and it was obligatory on him to follow the profession of the family in which he was born. This was the rigid form the caste system took. But evidently caste system was not strictly observed in the country of Āraṭṭa where the individual was free to choose his profession and change it, if necessary, irrespective of the professions of the other members of family as well as those practised by his forefathers, which gave great amount of occupational mobility to individuals. It is tempting not to see in this what was probably a custom of long-standing and perhaps a part of the ancient way of life inherited from the Asuras.

The religion of the people of Āraṭṭa is described as *naṣṭadharma*, destroyed religion, which was forbidden to the Aryans, *ayajvānam*, not sacrificing, a term which is used in Ṛgveda to describe the religion of the Dasyus, the Dāsas and the Paṇis. In the Mahābhārata-passage it is the religion of the Vrātya, dasanuya (?) and the people of Videha. Bālhikas are classed under those from whom the gods, the ancestors and the brahmin do not accept anything. In general the Bālhikas seem to be treated as outcastes who probably deliberately remained outside the pale of Aryan social structure and also did not accept the religious beliefs on which the sacrificial system was based, which explains their being called unsacrificing etc.

In fact the Sumerian source and the Sanskrit source do point to a region which seems to be fairly definite, though the inadequacy of the available data cannot be ignored. If the Sumerian sources are giving historically correct information, with the ancient personalities as the heroes, the least that could be said was that about 17th c. B.C., the eastern kingdom was still known as Āraṭṭa and probably its prosperity was a matter of envy to the westerners.

This does not solve the problem of the nomenclature of the Asura-empire, but only opens a new line of enquiry.

Notes

CHAPTER I

1. Sir R.E.M. Wheeler enumerates more than hundred sites in his Appendix to The Indus Civilization, supplementary volume to the Cambridge History of India, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 138-140 to which may be added about 95 to 100 sites located by Mr. Suraj Bhan, and reported in Excavations at Mitathal (Hissar) 1968, Journal of Haryana Studies, Jan. 1969, vol. I.1.
2. T. Burrow, On the word *arma* or *armaka* in early Sanskrit literature, Journal of Indian History, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, vol. XLI, 1963, pp. 159-166.
3. R.A. Crossland, Immigrants from the north, Cambridge Ancient History, vol. I, Chapter XXVII (fascicules), 1967, Cambridge, p. 30. The brackets and emphasis are mine.
4. The Union of Wisdom and Means (*Prajñopāyasamāpatti*), a study in the origins of Buddhist Tantric ideology, paper submitted to the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Chicago, 1973.
5. Bṛhatsaṁhitā, ed. G.H. Athalye, Ratnāgiri, 1874, Chap. 14, vv. 6, 10.
6. As will be shown later this is really an ancient custom and vestiges of it are found even in ṚV. Guṅgu as people (ṚV X.48.8) and Guṅgu as the name of a goddess (ṚV II.32.8) are mentioned in ṚV, although there is no direct evidence to conclude definitely that the people worshipped this goddess. A close connection between the two may, however, be inferred from the identical name. M.N. Srinivas, Religion and Society amongst Coorgs of South India, Bombay, 1965, p. 186.
7. Text emended for a critical edition of Śriguhyasiddhi which is under preparation.
8. See note 2.

CHAPTER II

1. ṚV III.53.7; X.67.2.
2. ŚB I.2.4.1; AiBr. III.39.
3. In ṚV V.63.3d, Varuṇa and Mitra bring down the rain through the magical power of Asura.
4. For this interpretation of *māyā*, see below Chapter III.4.
5. ṚV VIII.19.23; 42.1.
6. ṚV I.151.4; VII.65.2; VIII.25.4.
7. ṚV V.42.11; II.1.6; V.41.3.
8. V.12.1; V.15.1; VII.6.1; *asūryaḥ* III.29.11.
9. IX.74.7; 99.1.
10. IV.53.1; V.49.2.
11. V.51.11.
12. VIII.27.20; Marut, I.64.2.
13. V.42.1.

14. X.55.4.
15. X.105.11; X.99.2.
16. VI.10.4-13 mentions the defeat of so many asuras by Indra referred to by name and glossed by Sāyaṇa as asuras. Also X.139.4; VIII.32.2; II.14.2, II.16.8. In his comment on V.29.9, Sāyaṇa explains *dasyūn asurān* i.e. dasyus who were asuras, as also in I.101.5. In V.30.7 Namucī is called Dāsa; VI.31.3 Śambara is called Dasyu but Sāyaṇa calls him asura. In X.138.3, Pipru is called Asura and VII.99.5 mentions Varcin with the same designation. It may be noted that MBh. tradition as well as Sāyaṇa used the word very frequently and interchangeably with Dāsa and Dasyu.
17. P.V. Bradke, Dyaus Asura, Ahura Mazda und der Asuras, Halle, Max Niemeyer, 1885, p. 22.
18. K.F. Geldner, Der Rig-veda, Harvard University Press, 1951 reprint, vol. 3, p. 383, note to stanza 3, emphasis mine.
19. Bradke, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
19a. Pāṇini, Aṣṭādhyāyi, V.3.117.
20. This is a summary of the chapter on the origins of the Assyrians, S. Smith, Early History of Assyria, London, 1928, Chapter VIII.
21. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-128. The Pyramid texts are dated by J.H. Breasted, 'A History of Egypt', as between B.C. 2750 to B.C. 2475.
22. Henry Frankfort, Kingship and the gods, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948, p. 246.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
24. For depiction on seals, see E.J.H. Mackay, FEM, vol. II, pl. XCIX, A; as pottery motif: Mackay, *op. cit.*, pl. LXVIII.13; pl. LXX, 28; M.S. Vats, Excavations at Harappa, Delhi, 1940, pl. LXVII.11; pl. LXVIII, 43-48. As an ideogram: Harappa sign Manual no. 326; seals nos. 37, 268, etc., also no. 327. The motif has been found on pottery on the Indus civilization sites in India and Afghanistan. If this is taken to be the characteristic motif of the Indus civilization, it may be traced even outside the present limits of Indus civilization at Bampur, etc.
25. For detailed discussion, see infra Chapter XI.2.
26. L.H. Gray, Foundations of Iranian Religions, Bombay, 1925 (?), pp. 9-10.
27. This has been confirmed by Mr M.F. Kanga, the eminent Avestan scholar in a personal oral communication which is gratefully acknowledged.
28. Ch. Bartholomae, Altiranisches Wörterbuch, Berlin, 1961, p. 293, col. 1.
29. Bradke, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
29a. R. Ghirshman, Persia from the origins to Alexander, U.S.A. (Thames & Hudson), 1964, pp. 268-269.
29b. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
29c. R. Ghirshman, Iran from the earliest times to the Islamic conquest, Penguin books (English version), London, 1954, pl. 9, p. 104.
30. Vedic Mythology, Strassburg, 1897, p. 157.
31. Unless otherwise mentioned, this refers to Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, under respective headings.
32. Although it is not possible to establish any direct link between *jhaṣa* and *dasa*, an interesting possibility of the two words being originally identical can be postulated on the basis of the linguistic change observed from proto-Semitic d to Akkadian z > Skt. jh.
33. R.T.H. Griffith, The texts of the White Yajurveda, Benares, 1899, p. 257.
34. A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith, Vedic Index, Delhi, 1958 reprint, vol. II, p. 74.
35. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. According to the text of the Mādhyandina School, translated by J. Eggeling, Sacred Books of the East, vol. XII, Oxford, 1882, part I, pp. 161-162.
35a. I.E.S. Edwards, The late C.J. Gadd, N.G.L. Hammond (Ed.), Cambridge Ancient History, Third edition, Cambridge, 1971, vol. I, part 2, p. 127.

36. Cp. ṚV VIII.14.14 where Indra is said to have shaken off the Dasyus who were trying to climb upto heaven. Also see I.33.7, where Indra is said to have burnt them down.
37. Bartholomae, *op. cit.*, Col. 706-711; Kanga, An Avesta-English-Gujarathi dictionary, Bombay.
38. ṚV VI.18.3; VII.5.6; II.11.18; I.51.8.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Bartholomae, *op. cit.*, Col. 710.
41. Macdonell & Keith, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 472.
42. D.D. Kosambi, An introduction to the study of Indian history, Bombay, 1956, p. 67. The Bania community of Uttara Pradesh seems to be a distinct caste which is not found in other parts of India. The mentality of the community is extremely orthodox and they share the trait of the love of wealth with their ancestors.
43. Macdonell & Keith, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 471.

43a. The name Shu-na-ash-shu-ra occurs in the Alalaḫ tablets (14.3; M. Mayrhofer, Indo-Iranisches sprachgut aus Alalaḫ, Indo-Iranian Journal, vol. IV, 1960, pp. 138-149) and is also borne by the king of Kizwatana. It is considered to be a proto-Aryan name. However, the theophorous element ashshura forming the latter part of the name speaks against such interpretation. The orthography seems to be clear enough. The tradition in both the cases appears to be identical, probably Akkadian, later inherited by Assyrians.

44. C.H. Gordon, Canaanite Mythology, in Mythologies of the ancient world, ed., S.N. Kramer, Anchor works, New York, 1961, p. 191.
45. This part of the narrative is rather obscure and conceals effectively a secret of Saramā which was probably that she came into possession of the secret hiding place of the cows by being intimate with the *'eka'* who supplies her with the information. This explains Indra's concern for her *prajā*, progeny, which was probably conceived while she was on this mission. It also explains their matronym.
46. R. Fick, Social organisation in north-eastern India in Buddha's time, Calcutta, 1920, p. 219.
47. T.W. Rhys-Davids and W. Stede, The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary, London, 1959, p. 403.
48. H.T. Seth, Pāia-sadda-mahaṇṇavo, Calcutta, 1928, pp. 652-53.
49. Rhys-Davids and Stede, *op. cit.*, pp. 596, 607.
50. H.T. Seth, *op. cit.*, pp. 923, 941.
51. Cambridge Ancient History. Third edition, vol. I, part 2, p. 759.
52. W.F. Leemans, The Old Babylonian Merchant, Leiden, 1950.
53. See below Chapter XII.4.

CHAPTER III

1. A. Leo Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, Chicago, 1964, p. 346; C. Bezold, Catalogue of the Cuneiform tablets in the Kouyunjik collection of the British Museum, vol. V, London, 1899, pp. 1957-1958.
2. ṚV IV.42.7 etc.
3. Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, pp. 59-60.
4. ṚV III.41.1; VIII.33.5; IX.88.4; X.104.8; 110.10, etc.
5. ṚV I.102.7; II.20.7; III.54.15; V.30.11; VIII.1.7-8; 61.8,10 etc.
6. ṚV II.35.6.
7. Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 538, *pūr*, fn. 4.
8. Geldner, Der Rigveda, vol. I, p. 321, fn. 6c.
9. I.166.8; VII.15.14.

9a. Yasht X.52, said of Nairyo Saṅha.

10. Śuṣṇa, VI.20.4; Namucī, I.53.7; Bṛśaya VI.61.3 etc.
11. H. Grassman, Wörterbuch Zum Ṛgveda, Wiesbaden, 1955, Col. 1935.
12. Bezold, *op. cit.*, p. 1958.
13. ṚV I.33.12.
14. ṚV I.33.12.
15. ṚV I.54.5.
16. ṚV VIII.40.10,11; X.22.11.
17. H. Frankfort, Kingship and the gods, Fig. 43. The famous stella of Naram-Sin shows the king wearing a headgear to which are attached two horns.
18. Geldner, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 354, fn. 10d. cp. *āṇḍ* (Ashkun), penis, G. Morgenstierne, Report on a linguistic mission to Afghanistan, Oslo, 1962, p. 62.
19. A.A. Macdonell, Bṛhaddevatā, HOS, reprint, 1965, Delhi, vol. II, p. 169.
20. MBh, 13.7291.7301.

20a. In this context the reactions of some of the African tribes to a total solar eclipse which took place on June 30, 1973 are worth noting. 'In the huts and villages of Kenya reaction to the eclipse was awe mixed with surprise and even fright. "The sun has died", said a Masai tribesman on the city's outskirts. "Will it come up again?" asked his anxious wife.... Though the tribes had been told by radio and at meetings that the eclipse was nothing to fear, witchcraft-orientated elders of one tribe believe it was caused by the white man's equipment....' The eclipse turned the mid-afternoon into dark night. 'In Kenya's game parks millions of wild animals caught unawares by the eclipse, made as if night had suddenly descended. Temperatures fell appreciably, plant life curled up and rested and motorists on the highways had to switch on their headlights.' (The Times of India, Delhi Edition, Sunday, July 1, 1973.)

21. *apāraruṁ pṛthivyai devayajanādvadhyāsaṁ vrajaṁ gaccha goṣṭhānaṁ varṣatu te dyaurbadhāna deva savitaḥ paramasyāṁ pṛthivyāṁ śatena pāśairyosmāndveṣṭi yam ca vayam dviṣmastamato mā mauk/ araro divaṁ mā papto drapsaste dyāṁ mā skan vrajam o mauk/* VS I.26.
22. *Upamluptaḥ*=hidden, concealed which is obscure. Instead if it is read distressed, it may be meaningful. The sense hidden, concealed seems to have been influenced by *lupta*.
23. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 55-58.
24. For a detailed discussion, see Shendge, The Union of Wisdom and Means, A study in the origins of tantric ideology, *op. cit.*
25. Suttanipāta, Padhānasutta (III.2.2ff). Also see Shendge, *op. cit.*
26. ṚV IV.30.21; ṚV II.14.6, IV.30.15; IV.16.30.
27. AiBr. II.36; VIII.10 etc.
28. ŚB I.5.3.2, 7.2.22; II.2.2.8; VI.6.2.11.
29. TS 2.3.7.1.
30. M. Haug, Translation of Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, 1922, Allahabad, p. 73.
31. TS 6.2.11.1.
32. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 59.
33. TMB 7.5.11; cp. GB I.1.23.
34. Haug, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, p. 23. Indra and agni are called unvanquished in connection with Vṛtra killing in ṚV III.12.4 and VIII.38.2. There is nothing indicating any connection between Vṛtra-killing and the rite that goes with the story. Thus there is no evidence to conclude that the fight in the north-east had any connection with Vṛtra-killing.
35. AiBr. II.31.
36. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 153; ŚB I.5.4.6.
37. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part IV, p. 259.
38. ŚB I.5.4.6-11; TMB 21.13.2 etc.
39. ṚV VI.20.2.
40. ṚV VII.99.4-5.

41. Some additional hymns referring to the three traverses of Viṣṇu are: ṚV VII.100.3, I.155.4.
42. Geldner, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 214, fn. 6c.
43. See Chapter XII.21.
44. Haug, Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VI.15, p. 275.
45. See the earlier section for ŚB I.2.5.1-4.
46. VS I.18.
47. ṚV IV.16.12, V.29.9 etc.
48. ṚV I.53.10; II.14.7; IV.26.1; VIII.53.2. It may be that the name Kutsa was derived from what was originally a name of a tree which by reason of its being a totem tree of a particular family was given to an individual member of that family. A similar custom has been noted above amongst Assyrians who had named a month in their calendar after the terebinth tree. Kutsa is known as *costus speciosus* or *arabicus*. The name emphasizes its Arabian origin. Even now in India, especially in Maharashtra, the names of trees are found as family names as for example Pimpaḷe, Pimpaḷkhare, etc.
49. BG X.37.
50. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 921, col. 2.
51. ŚB I.5.4.6-11.
52. Haug, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
54. A. Cunningham, Ancient geography of India, Varanasi, 1963 (reprint), pp. 235-242.
55. TMB 12.3.14.
56. ṚV I.59.5.
57. ṚV I.78.4.
58. ṚV I.76.3.
59. ṚV III.15.1.
60. ṚV. III.18.2.
61. ṚV IV.4.4.

61a. ṚV IV.4.5.

62. ĀV III.12.6.
63. ṚV IV.28.3.
64. ṚV V.4.6.
65. ṚV VII.5.3,6.
66. ṚV VII.13.2c.
67. This sentence and the next paragraph amply illustrate the hypothesis that the sacrifices are symbolic re-enactment of the events which took place once upon a time. They assumed a formulaic form and were bestowed magical significance so that their symbolic performance could bring about the effect which was achieved originally. Here came in the magico-religious element which overlooked the ludicrous implications of the situation. As for example in ŚB III.4.4.6, *ājya*, clarified butter symbolises vajra. The devas clove open the fortresses with *vajra* therefore by this *ājya*, this *vajra* (bolt), one cleaves open these worlds.
68. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part I, pp. 54-55.
69. cp. TS 6.3.10.5.
70. Haug, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

71a. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-2.

72. Haug, *ukthya*, but Skt. text reads *uktha*.
73. Haug, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.
74. Martin Haug, Essays on the sacred language, writings, and religion of the Parsis, ed. by E.W. West, London, 1883, pp. 279-285.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.
76. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, I.9.2.34-35, Part I, pp. 265-266.

77. Eggeling's translation.
78. JAOS, vol. XV, 1864, pp. 143-163.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.
81. Haug, AiBr., p. 170, fn. 16.
82. ŚB VI.8.1.1-2.
83. Chāndogaparišišṭa as cited by R. Mitra, Indo-Aryans, contributions towards the elucidation of their ancient and medieval history, London & Calcutta, 1881, vol. I, p. 274, fn *.
84. Yājñavalkyasmṛtī, ed. Nārāyaṇa Rām Acharya, Bombay, 1949, Chap. 3, v. 61.
85. Manusmṛtī, III. 27-28.
86. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part V, pp. 429-430.
87. √*bhikṣ*, desiderative derived from √*bhaj*, to partake food, V.P. Limaye and R.D. Vadekar, Eighteen Principal Upaniṣads, Gandhi Memorial edition, vol. I, Poona, 1958, p. 168, fn. a to Chāndogyopaniṣad 8.8.5. *Bhikṣā* is treated in the sense of *subhikṣā* which appears elsewhere in Chāndogya. I.10.5 and means 'having good food or abundant supply of provisions (Monier-Williams, *ibid*, p. 1230). *Subhikṣa* also means abundance of food especially given as alms. It seems possible that the word is rather used in the sense of giving food according to the sacred precepts rather than begging, i.e. the living give the food or provide the dead with ample provisions according to the precepts.
88. *Asuraiḥ* is glossed by Sāyaṇa as *asuraiḥ saha yuddhe vijītya*, having been victorious in the battle with the asuras.
89. Gray, The Foundations of the Iranian religions, p. 20.

CHAPTER IV

1. W.D. Whitney, Atharvaveda Saṁhitā, Translation and notes, HOS, vol. 7, 1905, pp. 39-40.
2. Geldner, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 350.
3. Geldner has translated Vena by seer, probably basing it on the author's name which is Veno Bhārgavaḥ. I have supplied Vena in the brackets as it appears plausible that Vena refers to the seer who had divined the mystery of the universe as Vena, the solar bird, which is also the symbol associated with solar god/s.
4. *yoniṣu*=into the bed, as in 2d?
5. *māmaivete lokā abhuvanniti*/ JB 1.44.
6. G. Maspero, The dawn of civilization, Egypt & Chaldea, Translated by M.L.M. McClure, London, 1901, p. 37.
7. B.G. Tilak, Indian and Chaldean Vedas, R.G. Bhandarkar Commemoration volume, 1917.
8. Cp TS 3.4.8.4 where these trees are called the houses of gandharvāpsaras.
9. ṚV I.119.9; III.43.7, IV.18.13, IV.26.4,6; 27.4; I.80.2; 93.6; IX.86.24; IX.87.6.
10. Haug, AiBr.
11. See Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 149-151.
12. Haug, AiBr, p. 40.
13. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part II, pp. 233-234.
14. Gray, The Foundations of the Iranian religions, p. 83.
15. X.139.5. This hymn is attributed to devagandharva Viśvāvasu in which deva-gandharva seems to indicate, as has been already pointed out in the context of the episode of devaśunī Saramā that the gandharva was favourable to the devas as was the *śunī*. To distinguish them from their community, this epithet of deva is attached to their original designation.

16. Cambridge History of India, ed. E.J. Rapson, Cambridge 1922, p. 338; elsewhere (p.51) in the same work, the region is identified "Peshawar in the N.W. Frontier Province and Rawalpindi in the Punjab".
17. Macdonell and Keith, Vedic Index, vol. I, p. 219.
18. ṚV IX.85.10; the same imagery of milking is used in the opening verses of ṚV X.123 and AV II.1.
19. ṚV IX.51.2; 85.9; 110.8 etc.
20. TS 3 2.5.4a; Aśvalāyana-śrauta-sūtra 5.6.26; Kātyāyanaśrauta-sūtra 10.9.7a; Mānavaśrauta-sūtra 2.5.4.40a etc.
21. Harivaṁśa 9141.

CHAPTER V

1. Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 838.
2. ṚV I.59.6; IV.38.1; VI.20.10; 46.8 etc.
3. ṚV VII.18.19.
4. ṚV I.100.18.

4a. See Sumi Tokan, Yakshas, Guardian Tribe in the 4th Buddhist council, first century by Emperor Kanishka (paper submitted to IXth International Congress of Anthropological & Ethnological Sciences, Chicago, 1973, Plan of the Congress & resumes of contributions, 0367, p. 35. The hypothesis that the Yakshas were aborigines of the Kashmir Valley is put forth on the basis of Buddhist material.

5 The translation is Geldner's only the word yakṣa and the German equivalent are given in the brackets.

6. The word *ahimāyā* appears four times in ṚV once as an epithet of Pipru in VI.20.7 & in the other three occurrences it is the epithet of the devas. The term is interpreted in the good sense when applied to the deva and in bad sense, when applied to Asura Pipru. Both the words *ahī* and *māyā* have been suggested new interpretations above and in that sense, the phrase may mean the creative power of Ahī i.e. Vṛtra as Vṛtra is Ahī, par excellence, and probably the epithet is coined in admiration to the tough fight given by Vṛtra.
7. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 838.
8. Rhys Davids and Stede, The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary, pp. 545-546.
9. Whitney, *op. cit.*, p. 598.
10. Translation according to Paippalāda reading *bhaumam* cited by Whitney, *ibid.*, p 641.
11. G.P. Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, London, 1938, vol. II, p. 676.
12. W.W. Hunter, The Non-Aryan languages of India and High Asia, London, 1868.
13 MBh I.67.89 etc. III.257.35 ff.
14. M. Sylvain Lévi, Le Catalogue geographique des Yakṣa dans la Mahāmāyurī, Journal Asiatique (Onziéme serie), vol. V, 1915, pp.19-138.

CHAPTER VI

1. Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 849, col. 2.
2. VII.104.18c.
3. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 322.
4. ṚV IV.26.7; X.4.4; X.46.5.
5. Geldner has translated *rakṣas* with *dunkelmänner*, blackmen.

6. These dog-impellers move swiftly...
7. *māyayā śāśadānam*, feels (herself) superior by the (creative) power.
8. TS 5.1.3.4; 6.1.8.3; 6.2.9.2 etc.
9. TS 5.1.3.2 etc.
10. TS 1.1.2.1; 1.1.4.1; 10.1.
11. *māyayā*—through the power of agni?
12. Haug, AiBr., p. 47.
13. Manusmṛtī, III.33.

CHAPTER VII

1. Whitney, Translation of AV, p. 210.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 275, V.29.4.
3. Paper, Royal Achaemenid Elamite, *pisha*, white.
4. Zeitschrift der Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, vol. 66, 1912.
5. Inayat-ur-Rahman, The ethnological wealth in Swat, Pakistan Archaeology, No. 6 1969, pp. 286-7.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.
7. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 628, col. 2.
8. Manusmṛtī, III.34.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Monier-Williams, A Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 391.
2. ṚV III.37.9; 59.8; VI.14.4; VIII.32.22; IX.65.23, 92.3; X.45.6.
3. S. Lévi, Przyluski J., Bloch J., Pre-Aryan and pre-Dravidian in India, Trans. by P.C. Bagchi, University of Calcutta, 1929, pp. 11-14.
4. ṚV IV.57.8; X.101.3,4; see F.B.J. Kuiper, Ṛgvedic Loanwords, Kirfel Commemoration Volume, ed. by Otto Spier 1950, pp. 155-6.
5. ṚV X.48.7; see T. Burrow, The Sanskrit Language, London, 1955, p. 382.
6. ṚV I.28.1-5; see T. Burrow, *op. cit.*, p. 380.
7. ṚV IV.57.8; X.117.7.
8. Kuiper, *op. cit.*,
9. ṚV IV.57.8; X.106.10; Kuiper, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-6.
10. ṚV X.106.2.
11. ṚV X.71.2.
12. Monier-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 1138, col 2.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 1139, col. 2.
14. ṚV VII.50.1-3.
15. Read tsaru; Tai Sa ṅ iv.2.5.6; Mai. Saṁ ii.7.12, etc.
16. Read tuṣa; AV ix.6.16; xi.1.12 etc.
17. ṚV X.101.3.
18. ṚV X.31.9. To this list may be added *tilvila*, fertile, rich, *sītā*, furrow or produce of the land (?), *bīja*, seed, phala, fruit, *mūla*, root, etc.
19. See Whitney, Atharvaveda III.17.

CHAPTER IX

1. Journal of Indian History, vol. XLI, 1963, pp. 159-166.
2. See infra Chapter XII.3.

3. Wheeler, The Indus Civilization, p. 127.
4. S. Piggott, Prehistoric India, Pelican edn., 1950, p. 230.
5. Roth, ZDMG, VI, 73; Whitney, JAOS, III, 1852, 327.
6. Brackets mine.
7. Brackets mine.
8. Emphasis mine. As has been demonstrated above, the asuras were not vanquished in one battle. The conflict between the Aryans and the asuras and others was a protracted one.
9. Brackets mine.
10. Emphasis mine. S. Piggott, *op. cit.*, pp. 255-258. Once again may be remembered the ŚB tradition cited above which says that when the asuras were sitting in houses, the devas were wandering in carts. In fact the meaning of the word *ārya* or *arya*, if $\sqrt{r}$ is really the root from which the words are derived, may be a wanderer, one who moves, goes. $\sqrt{r}$ means to go, move, rise etc. The Ṛgvedic meaning kind, favourable, master, lord might have been later inventions contemporaneous with the vilification of the asuras.
11. Piggott, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
13. Wheeler, 'Harappa, 1946: the defences and cemetery R 37', Ancient India, no. 3, Delhi, 1947, pp. 75-83.

PART II

CHAPTER X

1. S. Piggott, Prehistoric India, p. 216.
2. E. Mackay, Chanhu-daro excavations, 1935-36, AOS, vol. 20, New Haven 1943 (reprint, 1967) pl. XCII, nos. 34, 38. No. 38 has been identified as pottery head rest but no. 34 also appears to have served the same purpose from its shape, though it is not as finished as the former. It is described in the catalogue of illustrated objects as cut-brick.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
4. *Ibid.*, pl. XLIII.3,7,10 etc.
5. *Ibid.*, pl. XLV.25, 28, 35, 37, etc.
6. *Ibid.*, pl. L.3.
7. Piggott, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-9.
8. Vats, Excavations at Harappa, vol. II, p. LXIV, 18, 19, 20, 24.
9. Piggott, *op. cit.*, p. 235.
10. Wheeler, The Indus Civilization, p. 70.
11. N.K. Bose and others, Human skeletal remains from Harappa, Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta, 1963.
12. Robert Heine-Geldern, The coming of the Aryans and the end of the Harappa civilization, Man, 56, 1956, pp. 136-140.
13. W.A. Fairservis, The chronology of the Harappan civilization and the Aryan invasions, recent archaeological research, Man, 56, 1956, pp. 153-156. This summary is based on Piggott, Prehistoric India; Wheeler, The Indus civilization; and Mackay, Chanhu-daro Excavations.
14. A. Stein, An archaeological tour in Gedrosia, no. 43, MASI, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 99, 103.
15. V. Gordon Childe, New light on the most ancient East, 4th edn, London, 1952, Fig. 77.10.
16. According to the chronology given by V. Gordon Childe, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-233.

17. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
18. V.N. Mishra and M.S. Mate, Indian Prehistory: 1964, Deccan College, Building Centenary etc. series No. 32, Poona, 1965.
19. Piggott, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
20. Mackay, Chanhu-daro, p. 51.
21. XIII.8.1.1 ff; also see supra Chapter III.12.
22. Mackay, Chanhu-daro, p. 25.
23. Wheeler, Antiquity, vol. XLIII, 1969, p. 73.
24. V.A. Smith, Indian Antiquary, vol. 34, 1905, pp. 229-244.
25. B.B. Lal, A note on the excavation at Saipai, Puratattva, vol. V, 1971-72, pp. 46-49.
26. Suraj Bhan, Excavations at Mitathal (Hissar) 1968, Journal of Haryana Studies, vol. I,1.
27. S.P. Gupta, Indian copper hoards: The problems of homogeneity etc., Journal of Bihar Research Society, vol. XLIX, 1963.
28. B.B. Lal, Further copper hoards from Gangetic Basin, Ancient India, VII, 1951, p. 25.
29. C.F.A. Schaeffer, Stratigraphice comparée et Chronologies, London, 1948, Figs. 265, 14-16; 18-19; and more closely Sialk-necropolis, Tomb 74, Fig. 252. 29; Fig. 301. 4-6.
30. V.A. Smith, *op. cit.*, pl. III.1; for description, *ibid.*, see p. 237.
31. Schaeffer, *op. cit.*, Figs. 173.4; 176.23,24; 293.2 (Zage).
32. Sword found amongst the copper implements, at Baharia dist. Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. See Purātattva, vol. V, pl. II, A. Appendix B, G.R. Sharma, Excavations from Baharia Dist., Shahjahanpur, pp. 42-43.
33. I have not had the chance to examine the original.
34. Yigael Yadin, The art of warfare in Biblical lands in the light of archaeological discovery, London, 1963, p. 149.
35. Schaeffer, *op. cit.*, Fig. 176.17.
36. *Ibid.*, Figs. 176.17; 281, Tomb 565, 1, 2 etc. Tomb 19, 1; Fig. 283, Tomb 20-21, 11, 12.
37. *Ibid.*, Figs. 168.12; 167.1, mound K. In the map accompanying the article on the copper hoards S.P. Gupta does not clearly distinguish between the bar-celts and stone bar-celts.
38. Schaeffer, *op. cit.*, Fig. 61.P.
39. *Ibid.*, Fig. 89.24 which seems more like a bar-celt.
40. *Ibid.*, Fig. 90.10.
41. *Ibid.*, Fig. 111, F,B,D,G; D has pronounced shoulders like the bar-celt of Smith, *op. cit.*, pl. III.7.
42. *Ibid.*, Fig. 172. 1-4, level II (2100-1750).
43. *Ibid.*, Fig. 174. 13, 19, 22, 23.
44. *Ibid.*, Fig. 183.
45. *Ibid.*, Fig. 293, lower right hand square, No. 1.
46. Allchins seem to have been confused for some unknown reason as they say that 'these curious pieces have sharpening on the rear of the arms while the inner sides of the legs are left blunt.' The Birth of Indian Civilization, 1968, Penguin books, p. 204.
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50. See supra Chapter III.6. AiBr. I.14 & VIII.10.
51. S. Piggott, Prehistoric copper-hoards in the Ganges basin, Antiquity, vol. XVIII, 1944, p. 180, fn. 19.
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53. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

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57. *Ibid.*, pp. 494-5.
58. ŚB I.2.5.1-7.
59. Eggeling, The Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa, Part I, pp. 12-14.
60. Indian Archaeology, A Review, 1963-64, pp. 56-57; V.N. Misra & M.S. Mate, Indian Prehistory: 1964, pp. 127-129; R C. Gaur, An appraisal of the proto-historic problems of the Gaṅgā-Yamunā Doab, Purātattva, IV, 1970-1971, pp. 42-50.
61. Indian Archaeology, A Review, *loc. cit.*; Misra and Mate, *op. cit.*
62. Mackay, FEM, pl. C.3.
63. Mackay, Chanhu-daro, pl. LXXII, 18-22.
64. Schaeffer, *op. cit.*, Fig. 300. 5,7,9-10,16.
65. *Ibid.*, Fig. 293. 5-7.
66. *Ibid.*, Fig. 267.
67. *Ibid.*, Fig. 227. 1-3, 26-36.
68. *Ibid.*, Fig. 194, 195 (Tomb X.33, 36 and several others in varying lengths).
69. *Ibid.*, Fig. 178.4.
70. *Ibid.*, Fig. 165. 2; Mackay, FEM, pl. C.4.
71. ṚV X.75.5.
72. ṚV I.149.3.
73. ṚV II.13.8.
74. ṚV VI.27.5.
75. Hillebrandt, Vedische Mytologie, 1965, p. 239, fn. 2.
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78. Jagat Pati Joshi, Excavations at Surkotada, a paper submitted at the International symposium on Radiocarbon and Indian Archaeology, Tata Instt. of Fundamental Research, Bombay, March, 1972, pp. 1-7 (mimeographed).
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80. A. Cunningham, Ancient geography of India, 1924, p. 242.
81. N.G. Majumdar, Explorations in Sindh, MASI, vol. 48, p. 23.

CHAPTER XI

1. M.S. Vats. Excavations at Harappa, pl. XCI.255.
2. Mackay, FEM, pl. CII.15b.
3. Mackay, Chanhu-daro Excavations, pl. L.15 & 15a.
4. C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, The Proto-Elamite settlement at Tepe Yahya, Iran, IX, 1971, Fig. 3.S.
5. S.P. Gupta, Prehistoric Indian cultures in Soviet Central Asia, in India's contribution to world thought and culture, Madras, 1970, pp. 239-248, Fig. 3, no. 35.

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5b. Carchemish, Report etc., Part I, Introductory, London, 1914, pl. A.4.b*.

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16. J. Burgess, The Buddhist stupas of Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta, Varanasi, 1970 (reprint), pl. XXXII.3, XXXVIII.6; pl. XLV.2; pl XLVII.3; pl. XLVIII.1; pl. L.2; pl. LIII.1, 18; pl. LII.8. A Cunningham, The stupa of Bharhut, Varanasi, 1962 (reprint) pls. XIII. XIV., XXX 3; pl. XXXI.3.
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32. *Ibid.*, no. 319.
33. Mackay, FEM, pl. CII.5a & pl. CIII.5b.
34. *Ibid.*, pl. CII.9a.
35. *Ibid.*, LXXXIV.75, 86, 454, 122.
36. Marshall, *op. cit.*, pl. CXVII.16; Mackay, *op. cit.*, pl. XCIII.14.
37. Marshall, *op. cit.*, pl. CXI.357.
38. Mackay, *op. cit.*, pl. XCII.11b & 11a.
39. *Ibid.*, pl. LXXXVIII.279.
40. Vats, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pl. XCIII.308; pl. XCI.248; Mackay, *op. cit.*, pl. XCVI.522.
41. Mackay, FEM, pl. LXXXVII.222, 235.
42. ṚV V.25.9.
43. ṚV I.97.8.
44. Mackay, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 340-41.
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48. D.D. Kosambi, An introduction to the study of Indian history, Bombay, 1956, pp. 56-57.
49. N.G. Majumdar, Explorations in Sind, MASI, vol. 48, Delhi, 1934.
50. Some of the conclusions drawn by Majumdar are worth citing as they have direct bearing on the problem of the post-defeat Harappans: "A degenerate and therefore, a late phase of Indus is illustrated by potteries discovered at the upper levels of Jhukar and Lohumjo-daro, and at certain sites brought to light on lake Manchhar. At Jhukar and Lohumjo-daro, the old black-on-red technique continued, but in a modified style, although this new pottery differs widely from the earlier fabric in type as well as design. It is either of terracotta or pale buff colour representing a coarse ware, on which the decoration is altogether poor and the number of designs extremely limited. The style can be further studied at the late site of Trīhṇi, in its characteristic schematized rosettes. Here, the black-on-red pottery is totally absent,

although there are other links connecting this phase with Indus. Side by side with this painted ware, there was prevalent a type of pots with incised strokes at the shoulder, some examples of which come also from the latest levels of Mohenjo-daro. In the course of time, the chalcolithic civilization of Sind seems to have passed into a phase when the red ware was replaced by a kind of black ware with incised patterns. It has been found at Jhangar near lake Manchhar, and also probably at the latest levels of Mohenjo-daro. At Jhangar, painted pottery is not altogether absent, but the number of specimens recovered is very small and the patterns depicted thereon are just a few... In any case, Jhangar illustrates an era of deterioration in vase painting, which has a great significance; for with the disappearance of the vase-painters we lose the thread of civilization we have been following so far..." Although these observations have been made about forty years ago and many discoveries have been made, the position has not undergone substantial changes. The important fact to be noted is that his observations in the field and the report are not marred by his preoccupation with a particular hypothesis or theory. They are fairly objective and hence important. Thus it may be that after the fall of the central authority of the Harappan empire, the people scattered only to come back to their homes after a short while. The life after the return was, however, not the same as before. The authority that standardized everything through force or coercion or any other means had collapsed and for want of a guiding force people painted pottery with styles surviving in the nearby regions or those regions where they had fled in those dangerous days which might explain the Baluchi and Iranian influence. *Ibid.*, p. 154. Emphasis mine.

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53. G. Bibby, D.H. Gordon, R.E.M. Wheeler, Persian Gulf seals, Antiquity, vol. XXXII, 1958, pp. 243-6 and *Ibid.*, vol. XXXVII, 1963, p. 96; Studies in honour of Benno Landsberger, Chicago, 1965 (not available to me).
54. For a detailed discussion of the types of seals, dating, etc., see Wheeler, The Indus Civilization, 1968, pp. 114-118.
55. S.R. Rao, The Excavations at Lothal, Lalit Kala, III & IV, 1956-7; Further excavations at Lothal, Lalit Kala, XI, pp. 14-30; Shipping & Maritime trade of the Indus people, Expedition, vol. 7, 1965, pp. 30-37; Shipping in ancient India in India's contribution to world thought & culture, Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee, Triplicane, Madras, 1970, pp. 83-107; Lothal and the Indus civilization, Bombay, 1973.
56. L.S. Leshnik, The Harappan port at Lothal, Another view, American Anthropologist, vol. 70, 1968, pp. 911-922; also see U.P. Shah, Lothal—a port?, Journal of Oriental Institute, M.S. University, Baroda, 9, 1960, 310-320.
57. Marshall, Mohenjo-daro, vol. II, p. 670.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 564.
59. Mackay, FEM, vol. I, p. 435.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 472.
62. Ganguli Benimadhava, The Student's Dictionary of Bengali, words and phrases done into English, Calcutta, 1914, p. 421.
63. Confusion is worse confounded as far as the levels of the furnaces, the brick-paved platforms and the workmen's quarters are concerned. It is difficult to reach any definite conclusion as the data correlating the strata in trenches IV and V of Harappa-Mound F is lacking and when the quarters are assumed to be contemporaneous with the brick-paved platforms, it really implies that stratum IV

of trench IV is contemporaneous with stratum III of trench V, for which there is no special reason. In any case the brick-paved platforms or the working floors might have been, at least in some cases, contemporary with the furnaces as one brick-pavement and a furnace were found in stratum II of trench V. Wheeler in his report on 1946 excavations at Harappa does not throw much light on this point and in fact he mentions both furnaces and circular working platforms *as if* they are contemporary. Ancient India, 3, 1947, p. 76. Further he would rather treat the furnaces as of 'a later and irrelevant phase'. However, it is quite clear that the furnaces belonged to a late stratum of the Indus civilization and thus furnish an important piece of evidence about the use of the mound.

64. Wheeler, The Indus Civilization, pp. 27-45.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
66. Majumdar, Explorations in Sindh, p. 90.
67. The Times of India, New Delhi edn, 12th July 1973.
68. See Vats, *op. cit.*, pp. 91, 122, 138 etc.
69. Marshall, Mohenjo-daro, vol. I, p. 274, cellars which are described as structures without entrance; Mackay, FEM, pp. 10, 47, 54, 96, 211.
70. Mackay, Chanhu-daro, p. 31.
71. Mackay, FEM, p. 211.
72. Marshall, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 205, 208-9, 212, 240, etc.
73. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 596.
74. Mackay, *op. cit.*, pp. 435, 476-7.
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80. See *infra*, Chapter XII, 13-16.
81. RV X.179.2.
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87. Steingass, Persian-English Dictionary, London, 1930, 2nd impr., p. 1074.
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92. A. Stein, An archaeological tour in Gedrosia, MASI, no. 43, Calcutta, 1931, p. 25.
93. Lambrick, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
94. R.L. Raikes, Antiquity, XLII, 168, 1968, pp. 286-291.
95. MBh III.106 & 107.

95a. Marshall, Mohenjo-daro, pl. CXI. 358.

96. Marshall, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 318, fn. 1.
97. *Ibid.*, pl. CXXXVIII.10. Mackay, Chanhu-daro, pl. LXIII, 14; pl. LXXIII.28, 31, all the three pieces are fragmentary and the sharpened outer edge at least in two cases makes it difficult to make any guess as to their use, though the shape is suggestive of sickle.
98. The parts of the plough are described thus: 'Besides the share, there are four parts viz. head, body, handle and beam. Head is that portion of the body into which

the share is fixed. It is naturally tapering in shape and may or may not be marked off from the body.' Peasant life in India, a study in Indian unity and diversity, Anthropological Survey of India, Memoir No. 8, Calcutta, 1961, pp. 25-29. The following summary is based on the same publication.

99. Indian Archaeology, a review, 1968-69, typed script, p. I-71.
100. Anthropological Survey of India, Memoir No. 8, *loc. cit.*
101. In connection with the borrowals in Ṛgveda, F.B.J. Kuiper's article 'Rgvedic loan-words' in the Kirfel Festschrift is extremely valuable. Studia Indologica, ed. Otto Spier, pp. 137-187.
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108. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
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115. R.L. Raikes, The end of the ancient cities of the Indus Civilization in Sind and Baluchistan, American Anthropologist, vol. 65.3, 1963, pp. 655-658; The end of the ancient cities of the Indus, *Ibid.*, vol. 66, 1964, pp. 284-300.
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118. Lambrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.
119. J.M. Casal, Fouilles d'Amri, Paris, 1964, Annexe XII Coquillages (Mollusques), pp. 170, 171.
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121. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, VI, p. 349.
122. Piggott, Notes on certain pins and a macehead from Harappa, Ancient India, 1947-48, vol. 4, p. 28, Fig. 2.
123. G.F. Dales, The decline of the Harappans, American Review, XI.1, 1966, pp. 18-27.
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134. *Ibid.*, pl. XI, MM. N.37,4; Wheeler, The Indus Civilization (1968), pl. XXXIII, B two sherds in upper row.

135. Indian Archaeology, A Review, 1967-68, p. 45; the typical brick size was 30 x 20 x 10 cms.
136. For motif of squares in light and shade at Chicha Dherai, see Stein, *op. cit.* (MASI, no. 37) pl. II, Ch.D.9,13; Amri, IC, Motif of ranged parallelograms painted in relief with oblique lines, see Stein, *op. cit.* (Shahi-dan pottery) pl. IV. Sh.i.2,4; Sh.ii.3; for Periano Ghundai, see *ibid.*, pl. VI, P. 92, 96, 97; for Amri, see Allchins, The birth of Indian civilization, London, 1968, Fig. 18, nos. 7, 8, 14; Fig. 19, no. 3.
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PART III

CHAPTER XII

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2. If *yātayat* is interpreted as to impel, to cause to strive, etc., the translation may read 'Through your ordinances or rules may you uphold peace, lawfully may you make people strive'.

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7. ṚV X.78.6.
8. ṚV V.57.8.
9. Geldner, Der Rigveda, vol. IV, p. 98.
10. ṚV I.39.5; VII.56.5; VIII.12.29.
11. ṚV I.37.2; 88.3; V.33.4; 57.2; VIII.20.4 etc.
12. ṚV V.53.4; 57.2; VIII.20.4; 12 etc.
13. ṚV II.34.2; V.52.16; 60.5; VI.66.3.
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15. R. Anthes, Mythology in ancient Egypt, in Mythologies of the ancient world, p. 17.
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22. Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
23. ṚV VI.51.1; VII.61.1, 63.1 etc.
24. ṚV VII.66.10.
25. ṚV I.50.7; VI.51.2; VII.60.2; 61.1; 63.1,4.
26. ṚV IV.30.4.
27. ṚV X.139.4.
28. Geldner, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 373, fn. 4d.
29. For a detailed discussion of solar symbols, see Chapter XI.2.
30. On ṚV V.81.4.
31. ṚV VI.71.1,5; VII.45.2.
32. ṚV I.35.9-10.
33. ṚV I.35.8.
34. ṚV VI.71.3.
35. ṚV I.35.2,5.
36. ṚV III.38.8; VI.38.1.
37. ṚV I.35.7-8; IV.14.2; 53.4; VI.81.2.
38. ṚV I.35.9.
39. ṚV V.81.4; X.139.1.
40. ṚV IV.51.1; V.49.2; I.35.7,10.
41. Macdonell, *ibid.*, p. 37.
42. ṚV VI.49.8.
43. ṚV VI.56.3.
44. ṚV III.62.9.
45. Macdonell, *ibid.*, p. 49.
46. ṚV X.61.4.
47. ṚV X.39.12.
48. ṚV I.34.10.
49. ṚV I.157.1; VII.72.4.
50. ṚV V.78.1-3; VIII.35.7-9; X.106.2-10.
51. ṚV VII.68.1; VIII.22.14; X.93.5; VIII.8.2.

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55. ṚV I.116.10 etc. ŚB IV.1.5.1 ff.
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60. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-223.
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62. ṚV VIII.26.21-22.
63. ṚV IV.46.2; 48.2; VII.91.5.
64. ṚV VII.90.6.
65. Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
66. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 175.
67. R. Thapar, Aśoka and the decline of the Mauryas, Oxford (OUP), 1961, p. 108.
68. ṚV I.51.3; 134.4.
69. ṚV I.100.4; 130.3.
70. ṚV II.15.8.
71. ṚV IV.16.18.
72. ṚV VI.18.5.
73. *Ibid.*
74. ṚV I.188.9.
75. ŚB II.4.3.3; Tai.Br. I.4.7.1.
76. ṚV III.4.9.
77. ṚV X.10.5.
78. ṚV I.85.9; III.54.12.
79. JB II.153-4; ŚB XII.7.1.1; 8.3.1 ff.
    TS 2.5.1.1; II.4.12.1; MBh 12.343.28 ff (BORI edn.).
80. ṚV IV.35.3.
81. ṚV I.161.1 ff.
82. ṚV I.110.2-3; I.161.11-13; IV.33.1,7 etc.
83. ṚV III.2.2; 3.11; 25.1; X.1.2; 2.7; 140.2.
84. ṚV X.2.7; 46.9.
85. ṚV VII.6.1.
86. Eggeling, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 47.
87. ṚV V.11.6.
88. ṚV VII.1.1.
89. ŚB I.4.5.13; XIV.5.2.5.
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97. ṚV I.124.3,4.
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99. ṚV VII.79.1.
100. ṚV VI.64.3; 65.2; I.123.4, 6.
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103. ṚV III.17.3; VIII.14.3.

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105. XIII.4.3.8.
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115. *Ibid.*, pl. I, T.Z. 16.
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117. *Ibid.*, pl. II, B.R. 2.
118. *Ibid.*, pl. II, Kar.6.4; Kar.6.9.
119. *Ibid.*, pl. XIII, Sh.T.iii.9.
120. *Ibid.*, pl. XIV,
121. *Ibid.*, pl. XV, XVI.
122. *Ibid.*, pl. XX, Bal 3.
123. *Ibid.*, pl. XX, Hor. 1; 3.
124. *Ibid.*, pl. XXI, Zik 5,6,11.
125. *Ibid.*, pl. XXI, Kul. 1. vi.1, 6; Kul.V.iii.1; Kul pl. XXII.
126. *Ibid.*, pl. XXII, Kul V.i.4,9; Kul V.vii.3; Kul V.i.2; Kul 14. pl. XXIII, Kul. V.i.1, Kul.V.ii.2; V.iii.3 etc.
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129. *Ibid.*, pl. XXV, Siah.4.
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CHAPTER XIII

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3. *loc. cit.*
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22. MBh, *loc. cit.*, v. 43.
23. *Ibid.*, v. 47.
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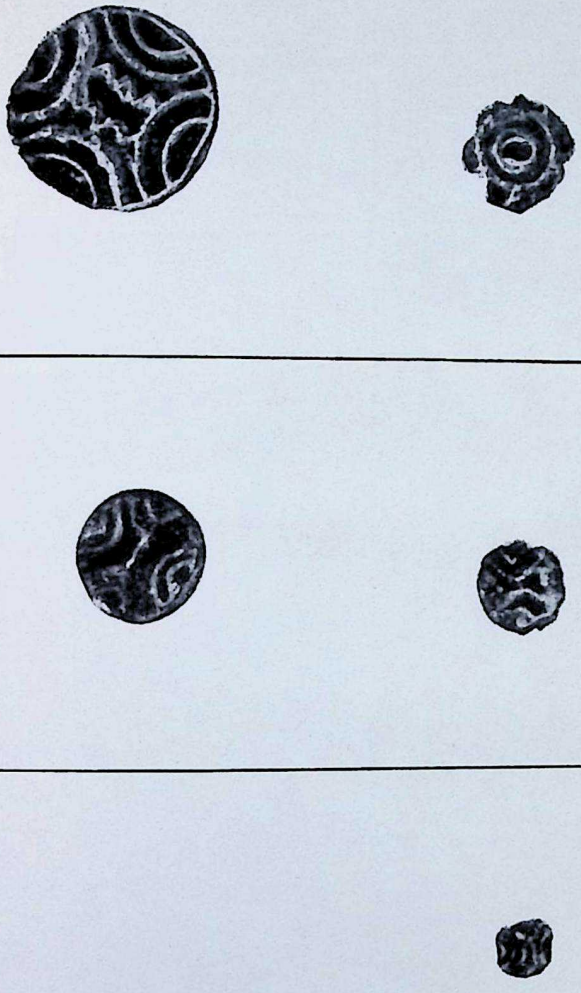
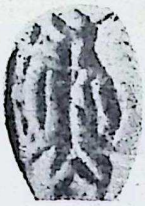
Illustrations

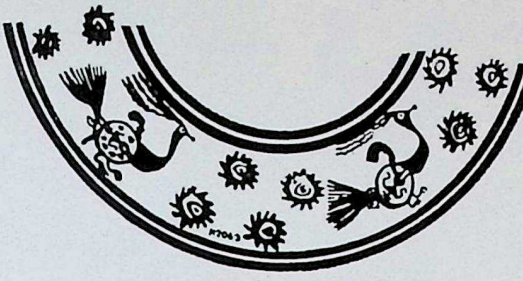


1 Copper seals from Shahi-tump



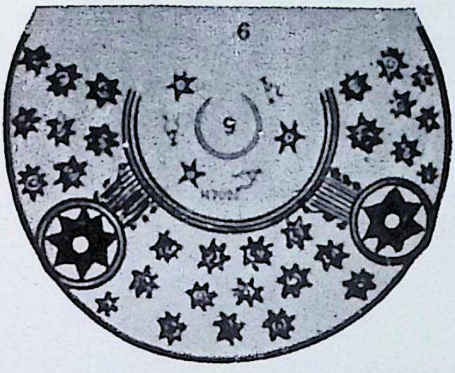
3 Seal with Harappan inscription from Chanhu-daro

2 Two seals from Chanhu-daro



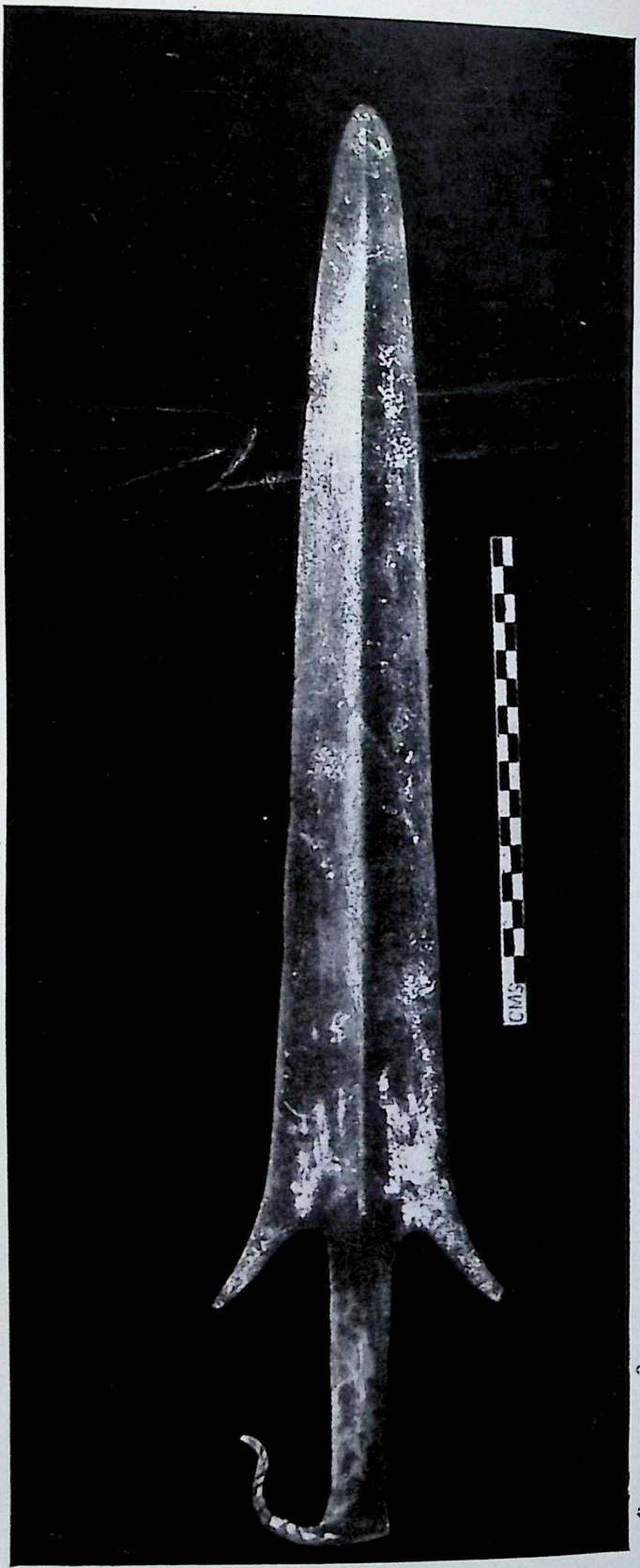
4 The painting motifs from Cemetery H pottery

4a The pipal branch motif in the solar-disc



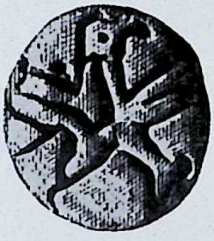
b Cemetery H pottery decorated with star-motif

c A seal from Chanhu-daro and from Mohenjo-daro



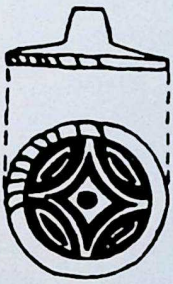
5 Baharia sword (Courtesy, Department of Ancient History, Culture and Archaeology, University of Allahabad, Allahabad).

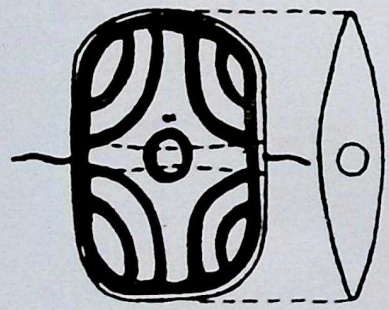
6 Eagle seal with cross on the reverse from Harappa



7 Eagle seal from Mohenjo-daro

8 Eagle seal with cross on the reverse from Chanhu-daro





9 Seals with cross-motif from Mohenjo-daro and Chanhu-daro

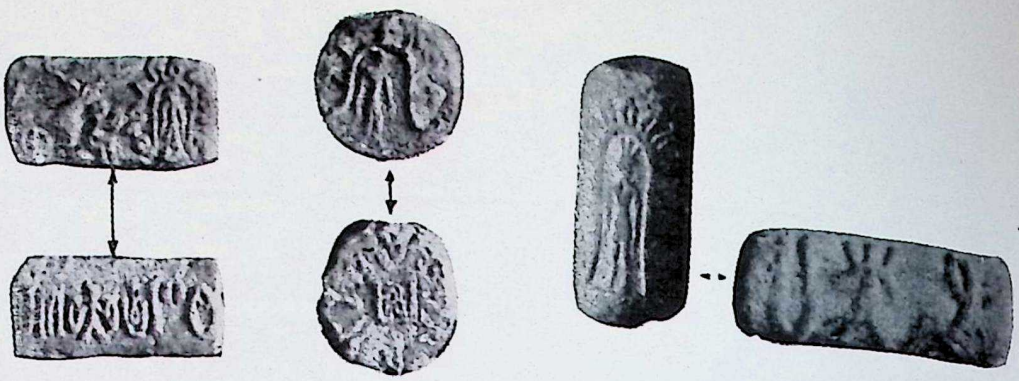
10 Cross-motif

a

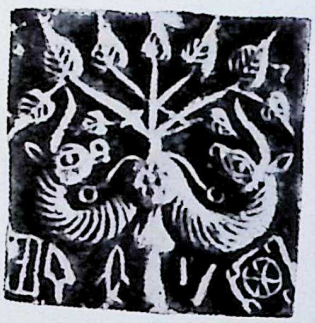
b

c

10 c Solar motif composed of urus heads



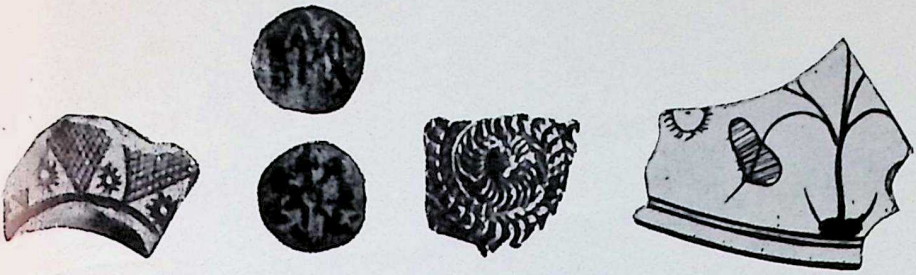
11 The divinity in the pipal-tree

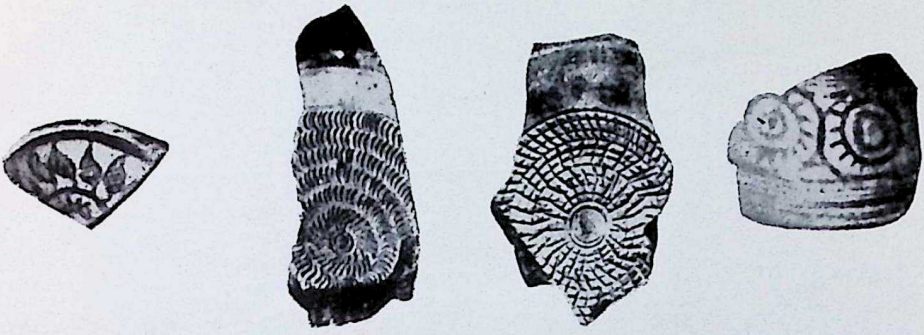


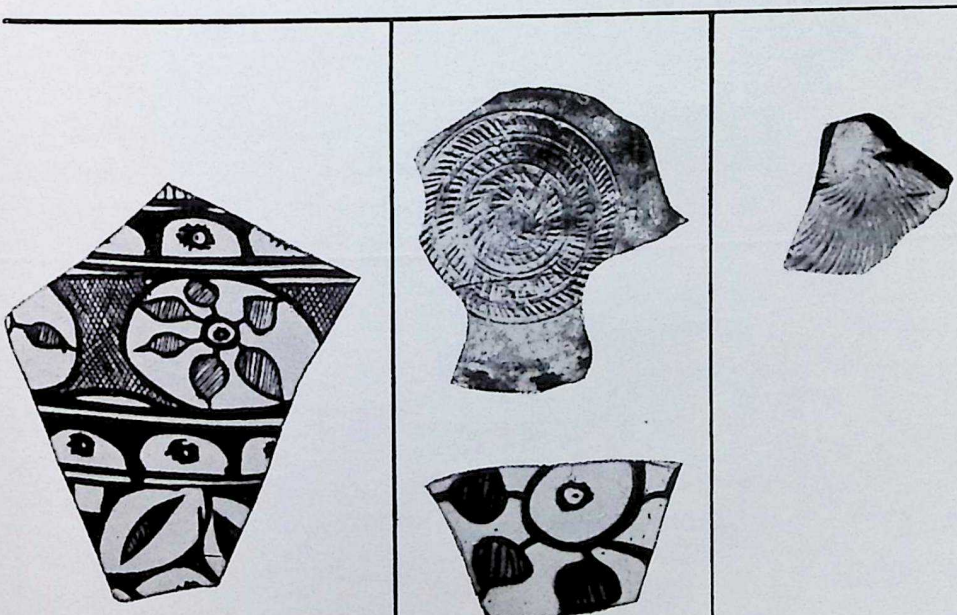
12 A seal with two urus on a pipal-tree

13 Seal with solar motif

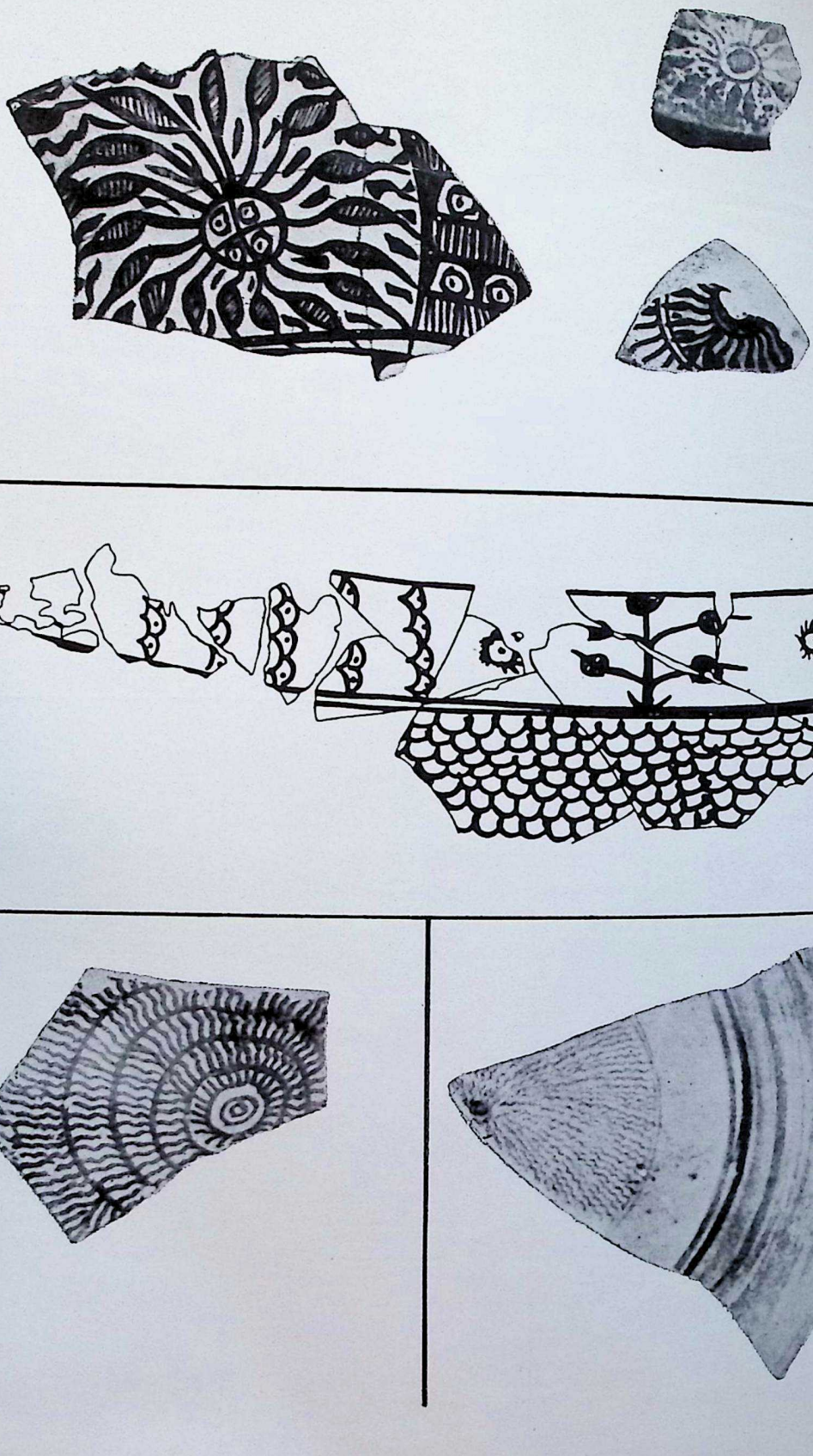
14 Solar motif painted or etched on the mature Harappan pottery

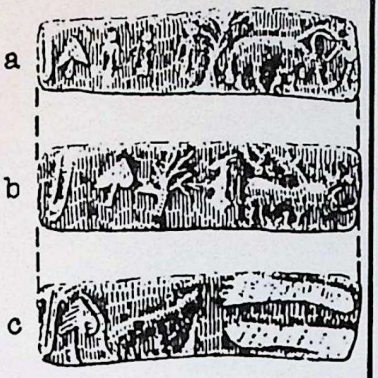




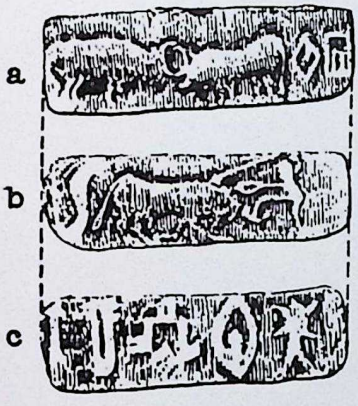


14 Solar motif painted or etched on the mature Harappan pottery



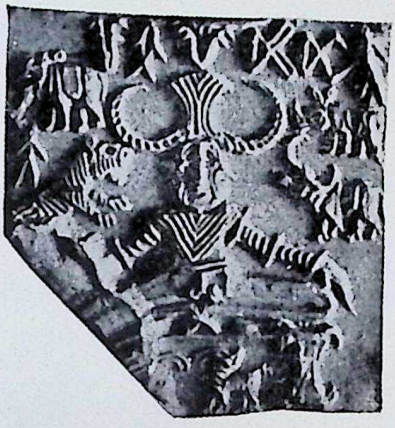


15 a Triangular amulet



15 b A Mithraic scene

16 a
Seal bearing a bison and an inscription

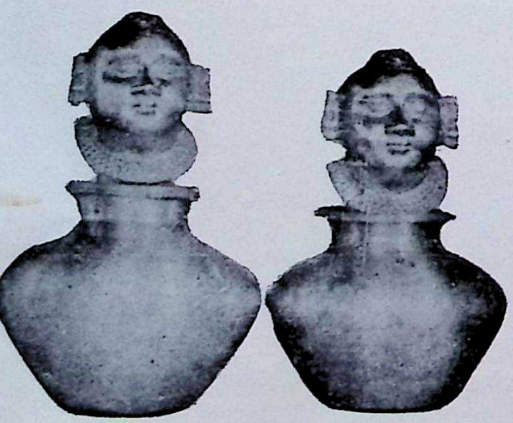


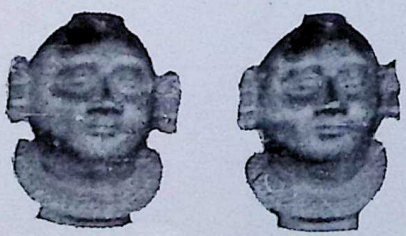
b The male-fertility god

c
Seal bearing a Brahmani bull along with an inscription

19 Terracotta figurine depicting the pregnant female

17 Mythic scene depicting the cosmogonic event





18 The Image of Gauri being prepared for ritual dress

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